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FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK

NOVEMBER 2006 NO. 81

8 secrets for a juicy roast turkey

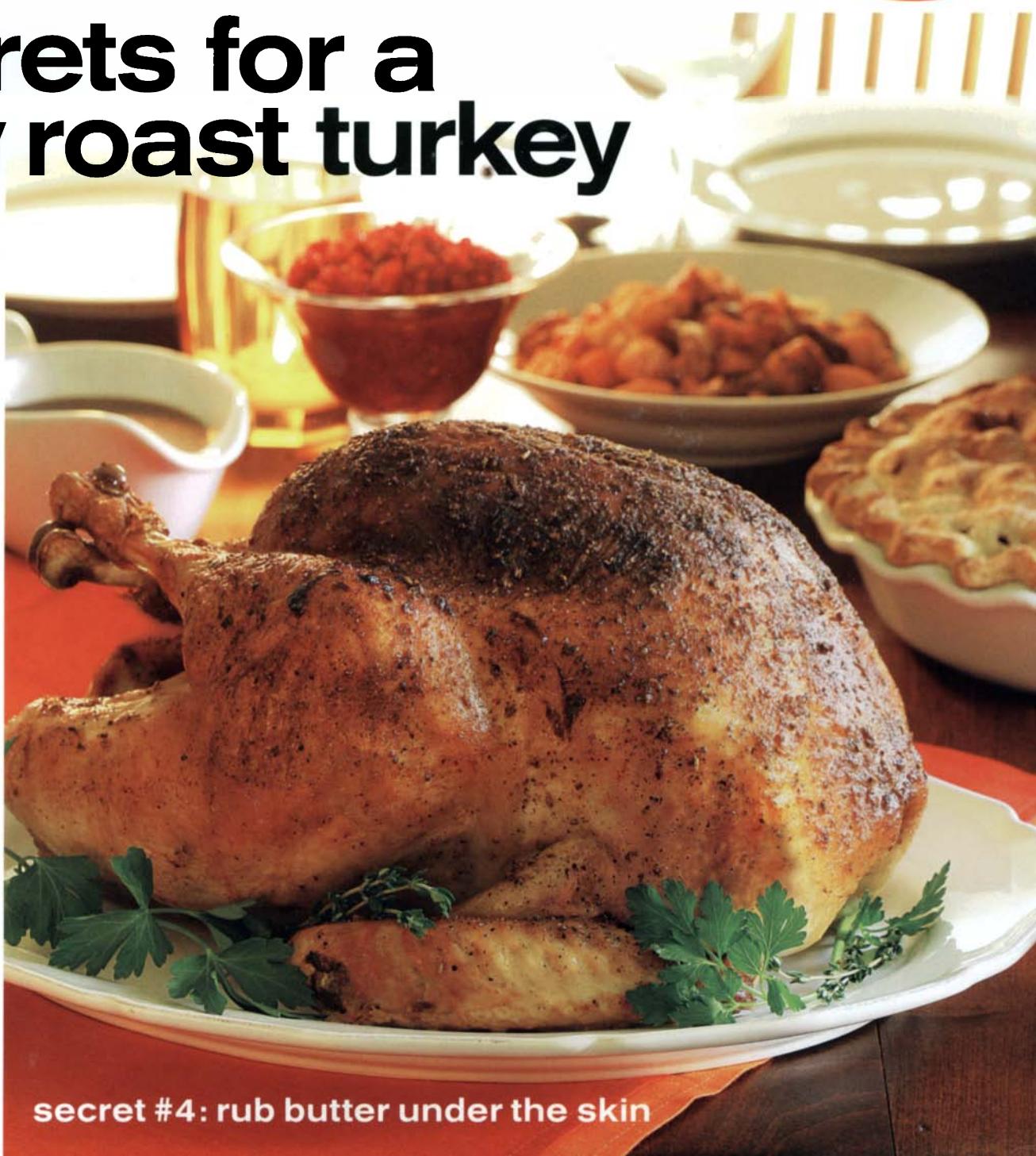
how to:

make fluffy mashed potatoes

add flavor to squash

bake a perfect apple pie

throw a tapas party



secret #4: rub butter under the skin

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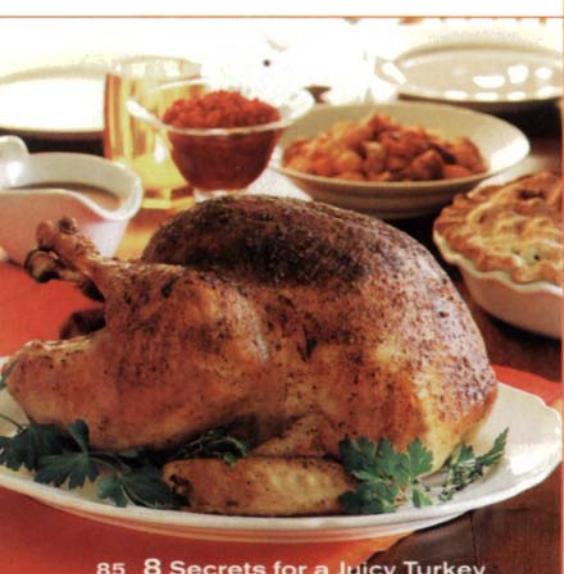
Fine Cooking

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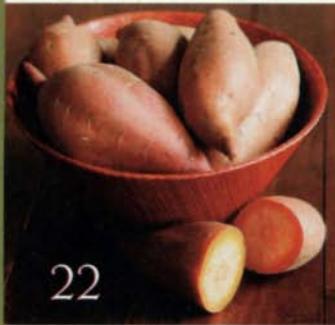
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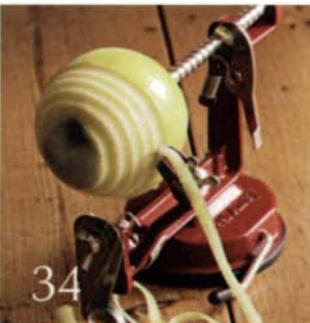
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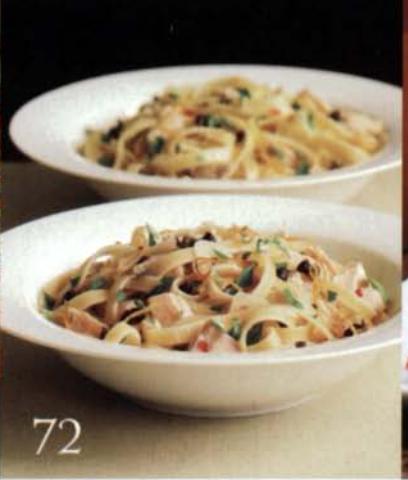
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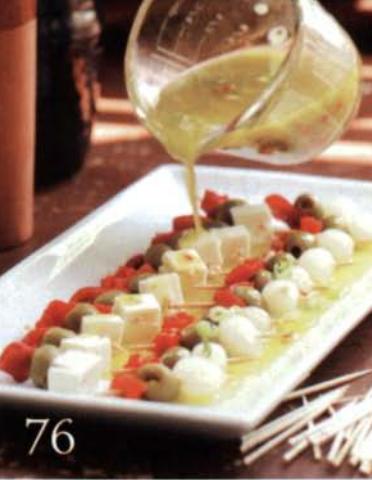
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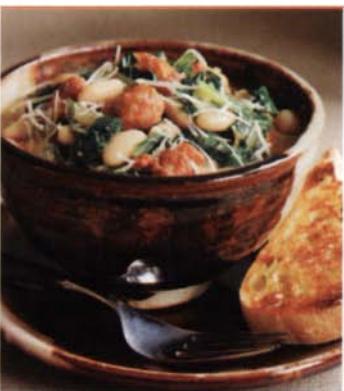
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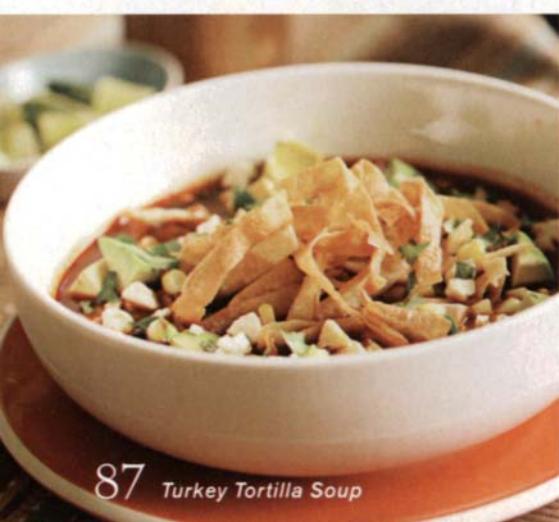
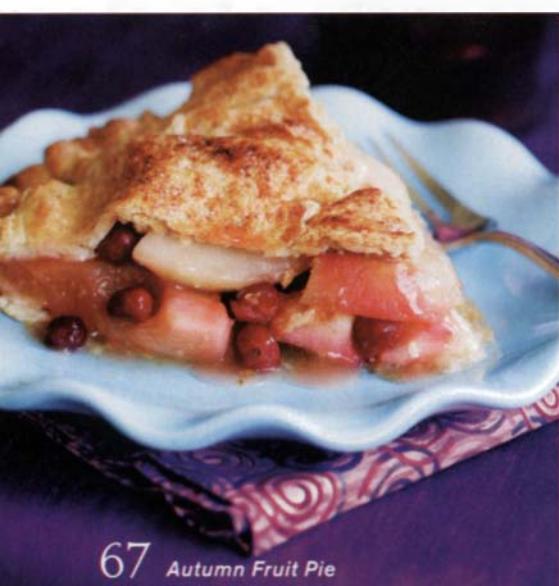
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- ◆ QUICK Under 45 minutes
- ◆ MAKE AHEAD Can be completely prepared ahead but may need reheating and a garnish to serve
- ◆ MOSTLY MAKE AHEAD Can be partially prepared ahead but will need a few finishing touches before serving
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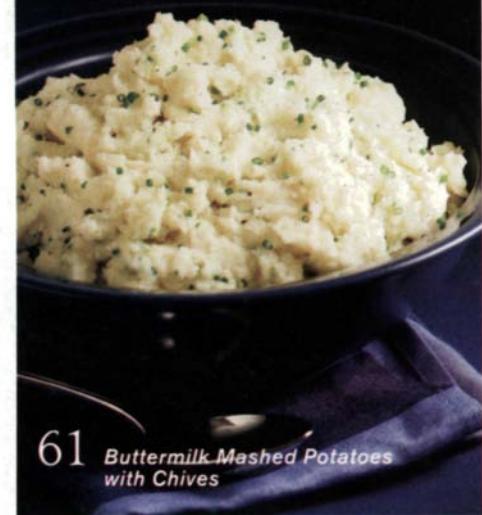
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Thanksgiving Dinner &

We've packed this issue with recipes for Thanksgiving, and you'll see several of them in the traditional turkey menu on the right. But that's hardly your only option. When it comes to menu planning, feel free to be creative. If you're cooking for a smaller crowd, why not skip the turkey and serve instead a cranberry-glazed roast chicken, as in the menu below, or the Dried Apricot & Date Stuffed Turkey Breast with Marsala Glaze on p. 49. (For more ideas, check out The Ultimate Thanksgiving Survival Guide on FineCooking.com.)

After the big day, the last thing you'll want to do is fuss over dinner. So we've pulled together a few casual meal ideas that are simple enough to prepare on any night of the week yet special enough to share with friends.

Note: Remember to check the yield on each recipe, as you may need to double (or halve) it to suit your needs.



Thanksgiving for a Smaller Crowd

Starter

Tomato-Fennel Soup, p. 98c

Main Course

Cranberry-Honey-Glazed Chicken with Fresh Cranberry Relish, p. 50

Sides

Baked Sweet Potatoes with Maple-Pecan-Shallot Butter, p. 24

Fennel & Pine Nut Stuffing, p. 55

Honeyed Cauliflower, p. 10

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Red-Wine-Poached Pears with Star Anise & Pistachios, p. 84



Beyond

Turkey & All the Trimmings

Main Course

Smoked Paprika & Fennel Seed
Roast Turkey with Onion Gravy and
Fennel Salt, p. 47

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Fresh Cranberry Relish, p. 50

Apple, Bacon, Leek & Mushroom
Stuffing, p. 55

Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes
with Chives, p. 61

Roasted Rosemary Butternut
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Kale with Pancetta & Marjoram, p. 85

Dessert

Classic Apple Pie, p. 66

3 Simple Supper Pairings

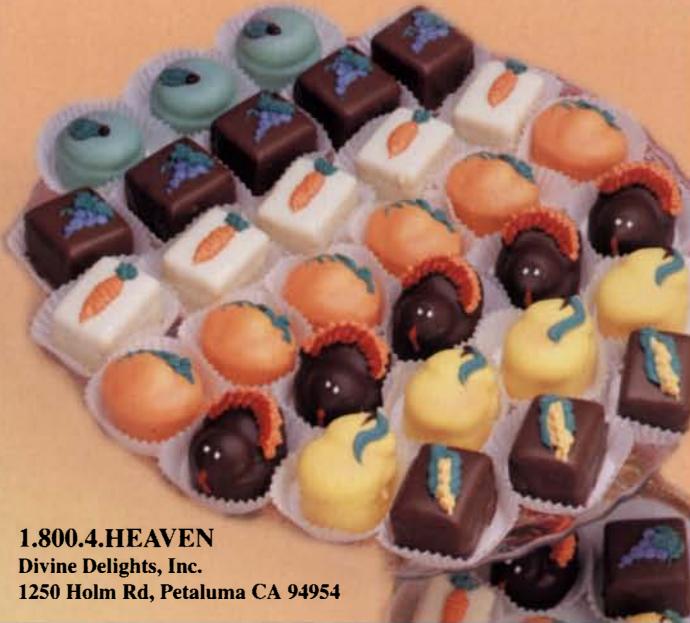
Rounding out any of these dinner menus is easy:
Just add a simple green salad, a loaf of crusty
bread, and vanilla ice cream topped with maple
syrup or honey for dessert.

Creamy Potato Soup with Pancetta
Croutons, back cover, and Seared Shrimp
with Pimentón & Sherry, p. 82

Sautéed Chorizo with Red Wine, p. 82,
and Spaghetti with Garlic, Hot Pepper
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Creamy Seafood Chowder with Bacon,
Thyme & Jalapeño, p. 98c, and
Buttermilk Corn Bread, p. 86

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from the editor

What FineCooking.com can do for you (and me)

I am one of those dinosaurs otherwise known as a Magazine Editor. Magazine Editors are in love with the old-fashioned concept of putting words and photographs together into tidy packages that travel through the (old-fashioned) postal system to get to your door and rest happily in your hands. Magazine Editors are not exactly "early adopters" of new technology. In fact, one editor I know still keeps his typewriter collection in his office for comfort. I kid him about being a Luddite, but the truth is I'm not much more forward-thinking.

This is why I felt a little queasy earlier this summer when asked to participate in a redesign of the *Fine Cooking* Web site. I imagined conversations with techno-geeks who'd be throwing around Web-isms like hot potatoes. HTML! (Is that a new grocery store chain?) In-context links! (Are those pan fried?) Blogs, pod casts, downloads! (Do these come in different flavors?)

But, good sport that I am, I pretended to be thrilled with the idea of dropping everything and getting Web-ified. After all, I felt guilty (really guilty) for practically ignoring the Web all these years. (Our friends over in Cooks Talk, our online forum, could attest to this. Susie? Susie who?) OK, so I was really busy getting a magazine out, but...

Something happened a week or two into Mission Redesign: I began to realize that this Web site could be a huge benefit for *Fine Cooking* readers. (Remember, I'm a little slow on the uptake.) Not only could it offer more of the great stuff we love about the magazine (more recipes, more tips, more techniques), but readers could also get more of what they really want when

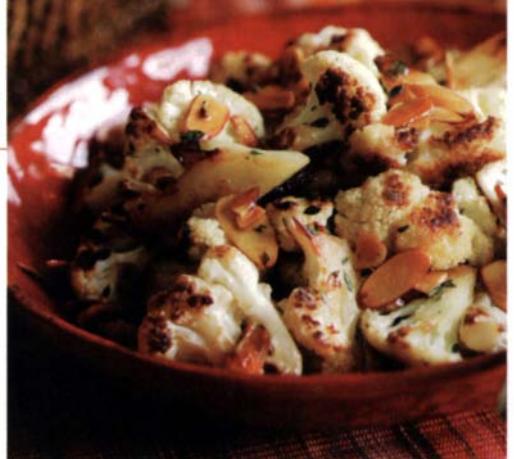
they want it, sort of custom-content on demand.

A great example of this is our "Ultimate Thanksgiving Survival Guide," one of the first special features we'll introduce this fall. It has something for everybody. If you're a planner, you can check it early for help creating a menu, choosing wine, or buying a turkey. If you're the last-minute type, you can log in on November 22 to get an entire menu that can be made the day of Thanksgiving, or you can grab our "emergency solutions" guide for troubleshooting tips. If you're a new cook, you can come here to learn how to make a basic pan gravy or carve a turkey. But if you've been around the Thanksgiving block a few times, you can pass right over that content and still find great inspiration from one of the 40 recipes we've gathered here. Or you can ignore Thanksgiving altogether and check out one of the other special features we'll be adding throughout the fall. (Turn to Links, on p. 18, to find out more.)

And this is just a start. We're refreshing the design of *FineCooking.com*, and soon you'll find navigating the site a bit easier, too. Next, we'll turn our attention to enhanced features (like the advanced recipe searches you've been asking for), so log on frequently for updates. You never know, now that I know what a blog is, I just might have to write one.

—Susie Middleton, editor

P.S. In the spirit of getting old dogs to try new tricks, try cooking my Honeyed Cauliflower recipe at right to convert a few cauliflower haters to lovers.



Honeyed Cauliflower with Toasted Almonds

Serves four as a substantial side dish or six as part of a Thanksgiving spread.

1 large (2-pound) head cauliflower
2 tablespoons honey (preferably a darker honey)
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
3 to 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh thyme
1/4 lemon
1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Trim the cauliflower and carefully cut it into 2-inch-long, 1½-inch-wide florets; discard any small crumbly pieces. Measure 6 cups of the florets and save any extra for another use. In a small bowl, whisk together the honey and vinegar.

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the 6 cups of cauliflower florets, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and toss gently with tongs to coat with the hot oil. Arrange the cauliflower in one layer and let cook undisturbed until the bottoms are lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Using tongs, flip each floret to an unbrowned side, and add another tablespoon of oil if the pan seems dry. Let cook undisturbed again for about 3 minutes to lightly brown that side. Repeat twice more for a total of about 6 more minutes, or until all sides of the cauliflower are spotted with golden brown. The stems of the florets will still be fairly firm, but the tops will be getting tender.

Raise the heat to medium high and add the honey-vinegar mixture and thyme. Toss to coat the cauliflower and continue to toss gently until the liquid reduces to a glaze on the florets, about 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, taste a floret, and add a little more salt, if necessary. Squeeze the lemon quarter over the cauliflower, add the toasted almonds, and toss to combine. Serve right away, or let sit for up to 30 minutes and serve barely warm.



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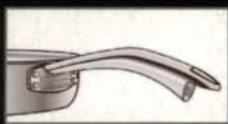
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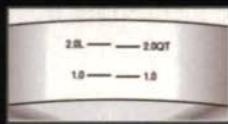
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from our readers

Store garlic oil in fridge

Regarding your recipe for rosemary oil (*Fine Cooking* #80, p. 36), please advise your readers of the danger of keeping garlic in olive oil for periods longer than a day or so. It is my understanding from many chefs that there is a botulism danger with this type of preparation. I have been told to never hold garlic in olive oil (without some kind of acid) for longer than a day.

—Susan Fuller, St. Paul, Minnesota

Editors' reply: You're right that botulism is a risk with garlic-infused oils, and we don't take that risk lightly. That's why the recipe instructions say to store the oil in the refrigerator and to use it within five days. That's a reasonable amount of time to store the infused oil without food safety becoming a concern, according to Linda J. Harris, Ph.D., a specialist in microbial food safety at the University of California at Davis. "The important thing for food safety is that oil be kept in the fridge," Harris says.

That ratatouille's a keeper

I saw your article on "The New Ratatouille" (*Fine Cooking* #80) and decided I just had to try the long (sautéed) version since the produce is all so perfect now. I have to say, this was absolutely the best ratatouille I have ever eaten or made.

I did do a couple of things differently. The onions took at least 30 minutes to caramelize, and next time I would use two pans to cut down on the time. Instead of sautéing the peppers, I roasted them and let them steam before removing the skin, then sautéed them for just 10 minutes. I also removed the tomato skins by plunging them in boiling water, as peeling was too hard. I also used a Japanese eggplant instead of the globe.

—Lisa Greisen, via email

Did we miss a mayo?

I just got a copy of my latest *Fine Cooking*, which I think is the best cooking magazine I've read. I was particularly interested in your mayo taste test, but you forgot to test what I think is the best

mayo on the market—Duke's. Duke's is made by the C.F. Sauer Company of Richmond, Virginia. I grew up in Virginia using Duke's, then moved to California where I had to switch to Hellman's and/or Kraft. When I returned to Virginia, I was delighted to again find Duke's. It has a tangy flavor and a firm consistency.

—Eleanor Mills, via email

Editors' reply: Duke's mayonnaise was not included in this Tasting Panel because for this department we taste only products that are nationally available in supermarkets. From our preliminary research (we have reader "scouts" who help us with this), we determined that Duke's was a regional product. A call to C.F. Sauer's sales department confirmed that Duke's is distributed only in the Southeast.

Keeping mayo kosher

As a longtime reader and avid cook who also happens to keep strictly kosher, I was surprised to find Gefen Mayonnaise among the runners-up in your review of mayo in *Fine Cooking* #80. While it was no surprise to me that it was the loser, I wondered why it was included at all. The fact that it was made with cottonseed oil leads me to think this was a special production of this mayonnaise only for use during the Festival of Passover, when many types of food are prohibited.

In the case of mayonnaise, since we refrain from using soybean oil during this time, it is made instead with cottonseed oil. Many of us wouldn't be caught dead with anything made from cottonseed oil, Passover or not.

It might interest you to know that Kraft Real Mayonnaise and Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise are also kosher, though not kosher for Passover.

—Kara Palley, via email

Correction:

In *Fine Cooking* #79, we mistakenly identified a mezzaluna pictured in Where To Buy It as a J. A. Henckels product. It's actually a Wüsthof-Trident mezzaluna, which sells for \$34.95 at SurLaTable.com (800-243-0852).

New from one of the *Fine Cooking* family

When we hired Laura Giannatempo a year or so ago to be an assistant editor at *Fine Cooking*, she mentioned

she was writing a little cookbook, a collection of recipes from her summer vacations on the northwest coast of Italy. Turns out she was being a bit modest. *A Ligurian Kitchen, Recipes and Tales from The Italian Riviera* (Hippocrene Books, \$29, due out in October), is a highly engaging, charmingly personal cookbook packed with authentic Ligurian recipes that can be recreated deliciously with American ingredients, from Pesto alla Genovese to Risotto ai Frutti di Mare.

Setting the tone in her introduction, Laura writes: "For me—a girl from foggy-in-winter, hazy-in-summer Torino in the northwestern corner of Italy, not too far from the Alps—Liguria has always been a strip of eternal sunshine, a fabulous place where temperatures never fall below floral-dress-fluttering-in-the-breeze level, where an endless stretch of blue sea flickers in dazzling sunlight, and where food has a special sensuous quality, particularly when your meals are relished in a front row seat to the Mediterranean."

From that point on, we meet quirky Uncle Franco, who hops on his *motorino* every morning to fetch the best freshly baked focaccia in the little town of Bonassola, and Aunt Silvana, mistress of the summer seaside kitchen, and discover how easy it must have been for Laura to fall in love with Liguria and its food.



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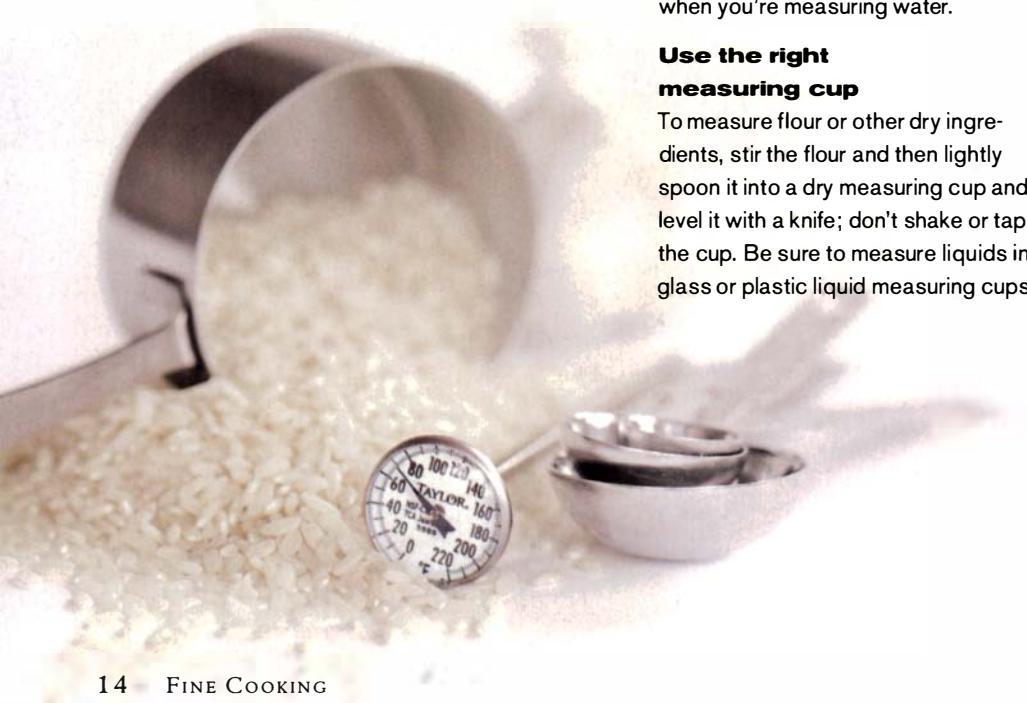
How to follow a recipe

- ❖ Before you start, read the recipe from start to finish so there are no surprises.
- ❖ Before actually starting to cook or bake, gather all the necessary ingredients and equipment. Prepare the ingredients according to the directions in the ingredient list (see "Watch those modifiers" at right for more on this).
- ❖ For determining doneness, always rely first on the recipe's sensory descriptor, such as "cook until golden brown." Consider any times given in a recipe merely as a guide for when to start checking for doneness.

Ingredients

Unless otherwise noted, assume that

- ❖ butter is unsalted
- ❖ eggs are large (about 2 ounces each)
- ❖ flour is unbleached all-purpose (don't sift unless directed to)
- ❖ sugar is white granulated
- ❖ fresh herbs, greens, and lettuces are washed and dried
- ❖ garlic, onions, and fresh ginger are peeled.



Watch those modifiers

A recipe ingredient list contains words such as "diced" and "chopped" that tell you how to prepare each ingredient for the recipe, but what you may not realize is that the placement of these "preparation modifiers" in the ingredient line is as important as the modifier itself. Take, for example, the following two similar lines that you may see in a recipe ingredient list:

- 1 cup rice, cooked
1 cup cooked rice**

The first line is telling you to take 1 cup of rice and cook it; the second line is calling for 1 cup of rice that has already been cooked. The difference between the two is about 2 cups of cooked rice, and that can make a big difference in the outcome of a recipe.

A pint isn't necessarily a pound

Don't confuse fluid ounces with ounces. Fluid ounces are a measure of volume; ounces are a measure of weight. For example, 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of honey weighs 12 ounces. The only time you can be positive that fluid ounces and ounces are equal is when you're measuring water.

Use the right measuring cup

To measure flour or other dry ingredients, stir the flour and then lightly spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level it with a knife; don't shake or tap the cup. Be sure to measure liquids in glass or plastic liquid measuring cups.

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Fine Cooking: (ISSN: 1072-5121) is published seven times a year by The Taunton Press, Inc., Newtown, CT 06470-5506. Telephone 203-426-8171. Periodicals postage paid at Newtown, CT 06470 and at additional mailing offices. GST paid registration #123210981.

Subscription Rates: U.S. and Canada, \$29.95 for one year, \$49.95 for two years, \$69.95 for three years (GST included, payable in U.S. funds). Outside the U.S./Canada: \$36 for one year, \$62 for two years, \$88 for three years (payable in U.S. funds). Single copy, \$6.95. Single copy outside the U.S., \$7.95.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Fine Cooking*, The Taunton Press, Inc., 63 South Main St., P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506.

Canada Post: Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to *Fine Cooking*, c/o Worldwide Mailers, Inc., 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, ON N8T 3B7, or email to mnfa@taunton.com.

Printed in the USA.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

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Newtown, CT 06470-5506 203-426-8171
www.finecooking.com

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Contributors



Suneeta Vaswani



Tom Douglas



Molly Stevens

Tom Douglas ("Small Thanksgiving," p. 44) gives us three great ideas for small Thanksgiving gatherings, and only one of them involves a whole roast turkey. Tom owns five of Seattle's most notable restaurants, and he's credited with putting Northwest cuisine on the American culinary map. He has written three cookbooks, the latest of which is *I Love Crab Cakes!*

Jennifer Armentrout

("Bread Stuffing," p. 51) is *Fine Cooking's* test kitchen manager and recipe editor. As the designated Thanksgiving cook in her family, Jennifer is always on the lookout for ways to keep the meal from getting boring. While abandoning turkey and the trimmings isn't an option, she has found that everyone welcomes a new twist on bread stuffing. Here, she shares her foolproof formula for concocting any stuffing you can imagine.

Julianna Grimes

Bottcher ("Butternut Squash," p. 56) lives with two picky eaters—her husband and her 3-year-old son—but even they request her golden, flavorful butternut side dishes. When she's not cooking for her family, Julianna writes about food and develops recipes in Birmingham, Alabama.

Molly Stevens

("Russets," p. 60) is the author of several cookbooks, including *One Potato, Two Potato* (co-written with Roy Finamore) and *All About Braising*, which won both a James Beard award and an International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) cookbook award. When she's not writing, Molly, a *Fine Cooking* contributing editor, travels around the country teaching cooking classes; she was chosen as IACP's 2006 cooking teacher of the year.

Carole Walter ("Apple Pie," p. 64) loves only one thing more than baking pies: teaching others how to bake them. For three decades, she's been teaching hands-on classes throughout the United States. In this issue, she walks us through the process of creating a classic apple pie, just in time for Thanksgiving. Carole is the author of several award-winning cookbooks, including *Great Pies & Tarts*. Her new book on coffee cakes will be released in the fall of 2007.

Suneeta Vaswani

("Chicken Tikka Masala," p. 68) was born in Bombay, India, and now lives in Houston. She has taught Indian cooking for almost 30 years and finds that her students most often request recipes for classic dishes like Tandoori Chicken and Chicken Tikka Masala. Suneeta is the author of *Easy Indian Cooking*.

Tony Rosenfeld ("Pantry Pastas," p. 72), credits his five-month apprenticeship at the Roman seafood restaurant Bastianelli al Molo for teaching him how to make quick, flavorful pastas. "I was stuck at the grill, but I was right across from the pasta cooks, and I watched their every move." These days, Tony cooks and writes in Boston. A *Fine Cooking* contributing editor, he has just completed his first cookbook, due out in March 2007, from The Taunton Press.

Sarah Jay ("Tapas Party," p. 76), the executive editor of *Fine Cooking*, discovered Spanish tapas when she studied in Granada in 1989. Since her host family took her tapeando (bar hopping in search of great tapas) nearly every night, she had plenty of opportunities to find her favorites. In her story, she introduces us to some classic tapas and shows how easy it is to pull together a casual dinner party based on "small bites."



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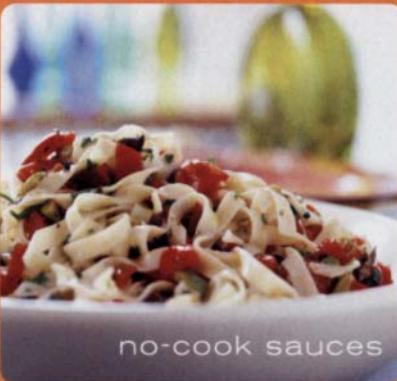
New at FineCooking.com

This fall, we're introducing a fresh look—and more recipes, tips, and techniques—at Finecooking.com. Starting in mid-September, you can visit the new homepage to find out what's "on the front-burner." Be sure to check out our special collections, like the Ultimate Thanksgiving Survival Guide and the Quick Pasta Guide previewed here, for help and inspiration for all the kinds of cooking you do.

ON THE FRONT BURNER

Quick Pastas

Jazz up your weeknight pasta repertoire with these fresh ideas



no-cook sauces

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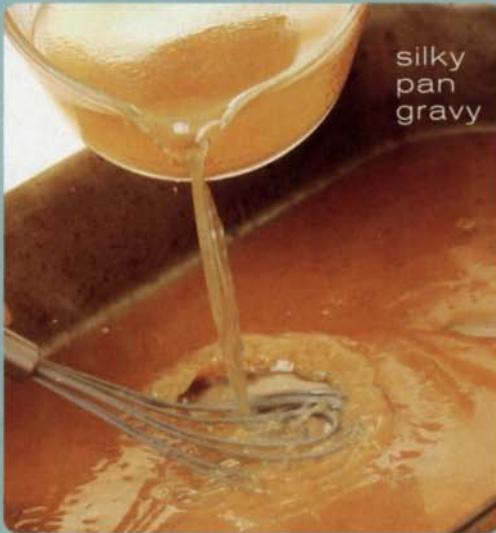
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Ultimate Thanksgiving Survival Guide

Here's everything you need to make the best Thanksgiving dinner ever, whether you're cooking it for the first time or the fiftieth.



silky
pan
gravy

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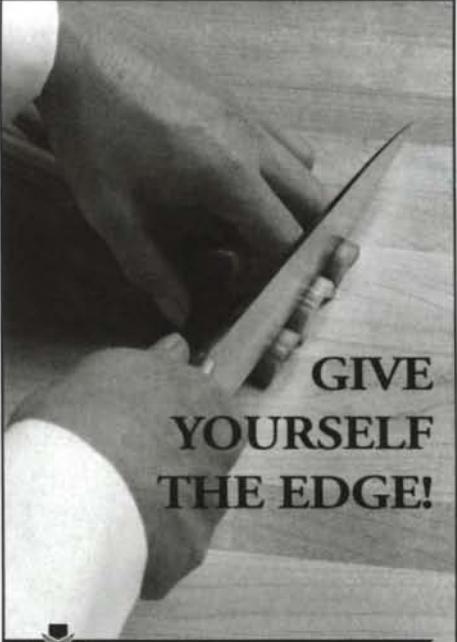
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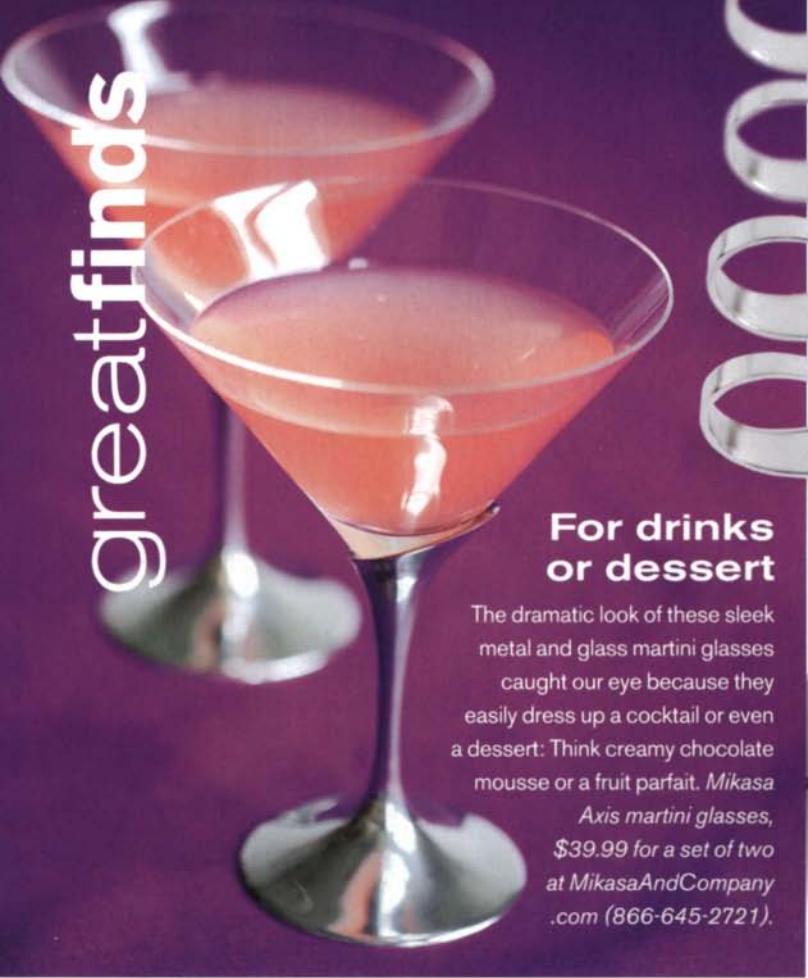
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Spoons that stand alone

For individual hors d'oeuvres, we're trading in boring platters for these hors d'oeuvre spoons. They have stable handles to steady them, so just fill each with a little caviar, a bite's worth of crème fraîche and smoked salmon, or an Asian dumpling, and set them right on the table to serve. *Set of six WMF Happy Spoons, \$29.99 at Zaccardis.com (877-839-8998).*



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We like these new stainless-steel servers because they're double-walled, which allows them to maintain their temperature. Just warm or chill them by filling them with hot or cold water, then pour out the water and add the food. *Bonjour stainless servers, from about \$40 to \$70 at PotsAndPans.com (800-450-0156).*

Serve It Up

Want to make your dinner party just a little more elegant? A few well-designed serving pieces can make all the difference.

BY REBECCA FREEDMAN

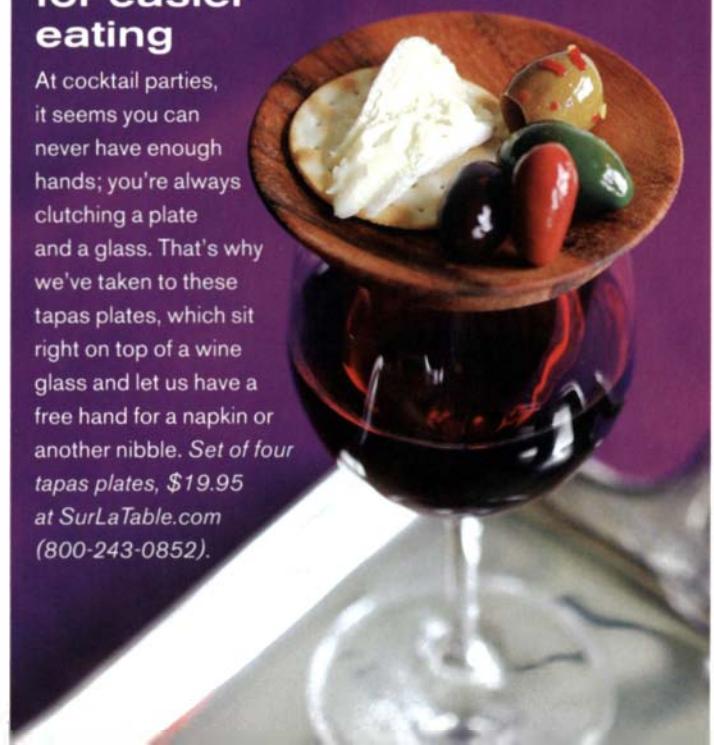


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You've probably seen chafing dishes at catered parties, but we think they're a great item to have at home, too, for keeping food warm for a crowd. All-Clad's chafing dishes are prettier than commercial versions and come in several sizes and shapes. *All-Clad 3½-quart round chafing dish, \$249.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).*

Perching plates for easier eating

At cocktail parties, it seems you can never have enough hands; you're always clutching a plate and a glass. That's why we've taken to these tapas plates, which sit right on top of a wine glass and let us have a free hand for a napkin or another nibble. *Set of four tapas plates, \$19.95 at SurLaTable.com (800-243-0852).*



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Sweet potatoes any way you want them

Make rich twice-baked sweet potatoes

using leftover baked sweet potatoes. Cut the potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out the soft flesh. Mash it and mix with softened shallots, grated Asiago, crisp bacon pieces, and a dollop of crème fraîche. Refill the empty skins and bake in a 375°F oven until hot and toasty on top, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Put together an early fall soup

of sweet potatoes, caramelized onions, red peppers, and fennel or corn. Caramelize the onions in olive oil, then add

the red pepper, sweet potatoes, and fennel or corn and lightly brown them. Season with salt and pepper, add vegetable broth, and simmer until very tender. Purée the soup, enrich it with a bit of cream, and garnish with fennel fronds or chopped parsley.

Try sophisticated sweet-potato fries.

Cut peeled sweet potatoes (a very large one will serve two) into 2x1/4-inch matchsticks. Heat a little oil in a heavy sauté pan, add the sweet potato sticks, and sauté over medium-high

heat, tossing frequently until browned and tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Season with salt, a dash of cayenne, lime juice, and chopped cilantro.

For tasty sweet-potato mashes,

mash boiled or roasted sweet potatoes with orange juice, ginger, and cream or with toasted and ground coriander seed, a little sour cream, and cream.

Make a simple Thai-style curry

by cooking chunks of peeled sweet potatoes and russet potatoes, onion slices, and diced

bell pepper in curry paste and vegetable oil for a few minutes. Pour in coconut milk, add a wild lime (kaffir) leaf, and simmer until vegetables are tender. Season with salt and pepper and serve with rice.

Make crispy-tender roasted sweet potatoes.

Toss peeled and diced sweet potatoes with olive oil, chopped rosemary, chopped thyme, salt, and pepper and roast in a 450°F oven until browned on the outside and tender inside, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh lemon zest before serving.

BY RUTH LIVELY

OK, let's get the confusing part over with. Those sweet, moist, typically orange roots we eat at Thanksgiving are sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*), not yams. A yam is something completely different. True yams (*Dioscorea batatas*), which are hard to find in grocery stores, are very starchy and dry. They have thick skins and white flesh and look like knotty roots. If you saw or tasted one, you wouldn't mistake it for a sweet potato.

Now that we have that cleared up, the rest of the sweet potato story is pretty straightforward. Highly nutritious (they're rich in beta carotene, vitamin C, and good carbohydrates), sweet potatoes have thin, edible skins and come in many shapes and colors, from the more common orange-fleshed varieties to yellow- and even purple-fleshed ones. The deep-orange sweet potatoes are usually moister and sweeter than their yellow counterparts. I'm partial to a variety called Garnet, which has very dark flesh that's especially sweet and creamy. Sweet potatoes come into season in late summer and are available right



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1/3 c. Flour
4 c. Fresh Blueberries
Optional: Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

Heat oven to 400°F. Combine flour with berries; fold in preserves. Place one crust in a 9" pie pan and pour mixture into crust. Cover with second crust, seal and crimp edges. Cut slits in the top of crust and bake for 45 minutes. Cool slightly before serving. Serve optional with vanilla bean ice cream. Makes 8 servings.



Angel Cake Supreme



1 jar DICKINSON'S® Pure Seedless Cascade Mountain™ Red Raspberry Preserves
1 jar DICKINSON'S® Lemon Curd
2 Tbsp. Water

In a small bowl, mix preserves and water; set aside. Split cake in half, horizontally. Spread curd on bottom half; replace top. Blend 1/2 of preserves mixture with whipped topping and powdered sugar; frost cake. Drizzle remaining preserves over top of cake. Garnish with optional raspberries. Makes 12 servings.



Blackberry Cheesecake Shakes

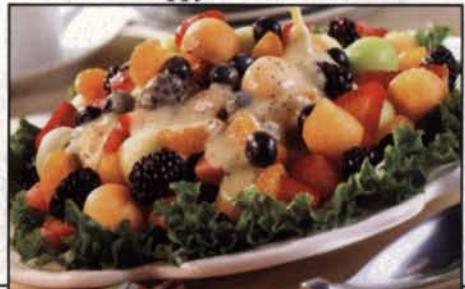


1 jar DICKINSON'S® Pure Seedless Marion Blackberry Preserves
3 c. Vanilla Bean Ice Cream
4 oz. Cream Cheese
1/2 tsp. Almond Extract
3/4 c. Milk
Optional: Whipped Cream

Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Serve in 6 chilled glasses. Garnish with optional whipped cream. Makes 6 servings. NOTE: The preserves and cream cheese mixture makes this shake an extra-special gourmet dessert!



Lemon Poppy Seed Fruit Salad



1 jar DICKINSON'S® Lemon Curd
1/2 c. Orange Juice
1/4 c. Oil
1 Tbsp. Poppy Seeds
Lettuce Leaves

In a blender, combine curd and juice. Cover and blend. Gradually add oil, processing until smooth. Stir in poppyseeds. Arrange fruit on lettuce leaves on a large platter. Spoon dressing over fruit just before serving. Makes 6 servings. NOTE: Lime lovers, try substituting Dickinson's Lime Curd.



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Baked Sweet Potatoes with Maple-Pecan-Shallot Butter

Serves four.

A generous knob of this mildly sweet butter turns a simple baked potato into a special side. The butter can be refrigerated for up to 1 week or frozen for up to 2 months.

FOR THE BUTTER:

- 3½ ounces (7 tablespoons)**
unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 medium shallots, peeled, halved, and thinly sliced crosswise**
- ¼ cup chopped pecans, toasted and cooled**
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves**
- Kosher salt**

FOR THE POTATOES:

- 4 medium sweet potatoes of similar size (10 to 12 ounces each), scrubbed and patted dry**

Make the butter: Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-low

heat. Add the shallots and cook until well browned and slightly crisp, about 6 minutes. Set them aside to cool.

In a small bowl, combine the remaining 6 tablespoons butter with the shallots, pecans, maple syrup, thyme, and ⅛ teaspoon salt. Blend together with a spoon or fork until the ingredients are evenly incorporated. Set aside for at least 1 hour at room temperature. (If not using within a few hours, cover and refrigerate. Bring the butter to room temperature before using.)

Bake the potatoes: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Lay the potatoes on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet and bake until the flesh is very tender when pierced with a fork, 50 minutes to 1 hour.

To serve, make a cut along the top of each potato, push on the ends to pry it partially open, and fluff the flesh with a fork. Place a dollop of the maple-pecan-shallot butter inside each potato and pass extra butter at the table, if desired.

through spring, but they're at their best in the fall and early winter.

At the market, choose firm, unblemished sweet potatoes and handle them with care, as they bruise easily. I am mystified by the admonition to use sweet potatoes soon after buying, because stored in a dark, cool place with good air circulation, they'll keep for months. They will get drier, but they're still perfectly good.

Try different flavor partners

I like to liven things up by adding something pungent, spicy, sour, or salty to play counterpoint to sweet potatoes' sweetness. Sharp cheeses pair well, as do sour cream, crème fraîche, and yogurt. Toasted pecans or walnuts are wonderful, as are sautéed or caramelized onions or shallots and roasted garlic. I find that all fresh herbs make good flavor partners, and citrus juice and zest of any kind add sparkle. Among condiments and spices, I like

soy and ponzo sauces, balsamic vinegar, maple syrup, curry powder, ginger, and paprika (especially the smoked Spanish type, pimentón).

Easy handling

Sweet potatoes are easy to prep. All you need to do is peel and cut them—and sometimes neither is necessary. They're good baked, fried, sautéed, and even boiled. They're a flavorful addition to winter braises and if you dice and roast them, they make a quick and tasty side to any fall dish. One of the best methods for cooking sweet potatoes is to bake them whole in their jackets. I don't even oil the skins (which, incidentally, I enjoy eating). I just lay them on a baking sheet and put them in a 425°F oven for about an hour, until they're very tender. A pat of plain or flavored butter is all they need—or a spoonful of pan juices if you've roasted some meat.

Bake sweet potatoes today, use them tomorrow

Baked sweet potatoes keep well in the fridge for a week or longer, so you can have them on hand to mash or use as twice-baked, in a soup, or just warmed up whole and brightened with a knob of herb butter or a spoonful of pesto.

Prep sweet potatoes ahead

As with any potato, peeled sweet potatoes will darken when exposed to air. To prevent this, keep cut potatoes fully submerged in a bowl of cold water until ready to cook, then pat dry and proceed with your recipe.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

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Top: Bill Yockey's turkey farm; **center,** a Standard Bronze; **bottom,** Bill with his pet turkey, King Buff, and Midget Whites in the background.

Preserving Rare Turkey Breeds

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

When Bill Yockey bought a 6½-acre piece of land in Linesville, Pennsylvania, as a place to go fishing with his father, he had no idea that he was about to become a turkey farmer. But when his neighbors asked if he'd raise turkeys for them, his interest was piqued.

A little research led him to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy and its list of endangered heritage turkey breeds. In 1991, he made the big move: He bought 11 young Midget Whites and 17 Standard Bronzes, both among the most critically threatened. Since then, Bill has become a staunch preservationist and an expert in rare turkey breeds who's often invited to speak at conferences nationwide.

Today, he still raises Midgets and Bronzes, and his Townline Farm Poultry Reserve has expanded to 34½ acres, with more than 300 heritage birds. Yet the farm remains true to its core values of sustainable farming: His turkeys are free to graze, forage for bugs and worms, and run and fly about. They're raised naturally with no antibiotics or hormones.

Bill is not alone in his effort to preserve rare turkeys. From California to Maine, an

increasing number of small turkey farmers are raising threatened breeds—not just Midgets and Bronzes but also Bourbon Reds, Narragansetts, and others. These farmers are responding to conservation groups and to a rising consumer demand for turkey meat with more flavor. In the last 50 years, industrial-scale farms have limited their turkey flocks to only one breed, the Broadbreasted White, bred to be bigger, grow faster, and have a larger breast—all at the expense of flavor. And this proliferation of the Broadbreasted White has put traditional breeds in danger of extinction.

"They're perky, nosy, and active foragers, and they taste great," says Bill of his heritage turkeys. Their natural diet gives their flesh a dark color (particularly on the legs) and a rich, deep turkey flavor with a hint of gaminess. Because they get a lot of exercise, their meat is chewier and firmer than that of supermarket turkeys, but it's still moist and juicy.

For more information on Bill Yockey's farm, visit www.townlinefarm.com or call 877-632-9242. For other heritage turkey sources, see Where to Buy It, p. 92.



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New Wines for Thanksgiving

BY TIM GAISER

Nontraditional bottles for a traditional meal

Viognier

This aromatic white originated in France's northern Rhône Valley. With its gloriously perfumed nose of white flowers and vibrant ripe peach and apricot flavors, Viognier brings out the best in roasted turkey, carrots, and sweet potatoes.

Bottles to try

2005 Georges Duboeuf Viognier,
Vin de Pays de l'Ardèche,
France, \$10

2005 Yalumba Viognier, Y Series,
South Australia, \$10

2005 Cline Cellars Viognier,
Sonoma Coast, California, \$16

Sémillon

This white can be found in a range of styles, from sprightly bottles with gooseberry and lime flavors (if you like New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, you'll like these) to lightly oaked wines with rich honey, mango, and preserved citrus notes. Your wine merchant can help you find some of each kind: Try the unoaked wine as a pre-dinner aperitif and the oaked wine with dinner—it's an easy, delicious match for the salty, rich, tangy, and sweet elements on the plate. Beyond Thanksgiving, try Sémillon with vibrantly sauced meat dishes like chicken and veal piccata.

Bottles to try

2005 Rosemount Estate Sémillon,
Diamond Label, Hunter Valley,
Australia, \$10 (no oak)

2004 Peter Lehmann Sémillon,
Barossa Valley, Australia, \$12
(no oak)

2004 L'Ecole No. 41
Barrel-Fermented Sémillon,
Columbia Valley, Washington,
\$14 (oak)

Grüner Veltliner

This once obscure Austrian white is becoming popular on restaurant wine lists and retail shelves. It has peachy-citrus flavors with notes of white pepper and herbs and is a great match for turkey dinner. It's especially nice with bread dressing, fall fruits, toasted nuts, and any of the spicier elements of the meal.

Bottles to try

2005 E&M Berger Grüner Veltliner,
Austria, \$12 (liter)

2005 Hiedler Grüner Veltliner,
"Loess," Austria, \$15

2005 Nigl Grüner Veltliner,
Kremser Freiheit, Austria, \$16

Whites

Thanksgiving dinner is perhaps the most traditional of all meals, but that doesn't mean you have to stick with traditional wines like Pinot Noir or Riesling. There are many other delicious, versatile, reasonably priced options that I'd urge you to try. When choosing wines for Thanksgiving, I look for bottles that have moderate alcohol, oak, and tannin (excessive amounts of any of these will overwhelm the food), such as the six varietals featured here. All of them are great matches for roast turkey and all the trimmings.

Malbec

To experience Malbec at its best, look for single-varietal bottles from Argentina. These luscious wines have soft cherry, plum, and spice flavors, which pair well with all the elements of Thanksgiving dinner, from the mild flavors of roast turkey to the more robust flavors of bread stuffing and winter squash or sweet potato side dishes. After the holidays, pair Malbec with hearty, meat-sauced pasta dishes.

Bottles to try

2004 Nandú Malbec,
Mendoza, Argentina, \$12

2005 Altos Las Hormigas Malbec,
Mendoza, Argentina, \$10

2004 Catena Malbec,
Mendoza, Argentina, \$18

Grenache

Grenache is the major component in southern Rhône blends such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas. But when bottled as a single varietal, the grape delivers a heady mix of jammy red fruits and pepper-spice that deliciously complements the richer elements of the meal like stuffing and gravy. As we move into winter, keep it in mind for hearty braises and stews.

Bottles to try

2004 Joseph Phelps Pastiche,
California, \$15

2004 Bodegas Borsao Tres Picos
(Garnacha), Campo de Borja,
Spain, \$14

2004 d'Arenberg Grenache,
The Custodian, McLaren Vale,
South Australia, \$19

Tempranillo

This versatile Spanish red shows juicy black cherry and currant fruit when young and notes of dried plum, herb, and spice as the wine ages. Regardless of age, the flavors of Tempranillo pair well with the various roasty and rich elements of the meal and are remarkably compatible with the tangy, citrusy flavors of cranberry sauce as well as spicy dishes like horseradish mashed potatoes.

Bottles to try

2003 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria,
Rioja, \$12

2002 Marqués de Cáceres,
Rioja, \$14

2001 Marqués de Riscal,
Reserva, Rioja, \$19

Reds

Contributing editor and master sommelier Tim Gaiser will be surprising his Thanksgiving guests with new wine varietals this year. ♦

Thickeners

A guide to the starches that make pie fillings, sauces, and gravies gel

BY NICOLE REES

As a food scientist, I'm always on call to handle my friends' and family's recipe emergencies, but this time of year the phone rings more than usual: "My grandmother is from Germany, and her recipes use potato starch to thicken everything—can I use flour instead?" Or, "One pie calls for tapioca and another flour—does it really make a difference which I use?"

The most commonly used starches (in this country at least) for thickening pan sauces, gravies, puddings, and pie fillings are flour, cornstarch, and tapioca. They don't all behave in quite the same way, though, so before you substitute one for the other, it's helpful to know a bit about starches in general and also about each one in specific.

What are starches?

Starches are long chains of sugar molecules—thousands of molecules long, in fact—that are found, in the form of tiny, dry granules, in all plants. The starches we commonly use in the kitchen come from grains (wheat and corn) and roots (potato, cassava, and arrowroot).

How do starches thicken?

Starch granules don't dissolve in cool or tepid liquid—stir some cornstarch into cold water and

you'll see what I mean—but when heated in a liquid, the granules swell, absorb water, and burst, emptying more starch molecules into the liquid. (Every starch granule is jam-packed with starch molecules.) The liquid then thickens because of the traffic jam of tangled molecules and also because the starch molecules sop up water.

All starches begin to thicken at around 140°F. But to achieve full thickening power, flour and cornstarch, which have a high percentage of a starch molecule called amylose, must come all the way to a boil and be held just below the boiling point for several minutes to cook off the raw starch flavor. Tapioca and other root starches, which are rich in a different kind of starch called amylopectin, thicken well before the boiling point.

Prolonged cooking and stirring as well as exposure to acids like lemon juice, wine, and vinegar weaken all starches' thickening power. Different starches, however, can endure different amounts of heat, agitation, and acidity before they start to break down and lose their thickening power. And there are a few other differences worth learning about, such as clarity, cooking characteristics, and how well they freeze and thaw.

flour

is the most common thickener used in recipes, from turkey gravy to apple pie, and for good reason: It's versatile, and in most kitchens, it's always on hand. But flour isn't a pure starch (it contains protein and other components), so it has only about half the thickening power of other starches. The best flour to use as a thickener is all-purpose flour because it's higher in starch than other wheat flours.

Appearance: The proteins in flour make flour-thickened sauces and pie fillings look cloudy.

When to use: Flour works best for foods that don't suffer visually from opacity: white sauces such as béchamel, simple pan gravies, beef stew, chicken fricassée, and apple or pear pies.

When not to use: Berry pies or sauces where clarity is important.

How to use: There are lots of ways to use flour as a thickener—that's the great thing about it: You can cook it with aromatic vegetables in the pot before adding a braising liquid. You can dredge stew meat in flour before browning it, and the flour will later thicken the stew. You can mix it with a little cool liquid to form a paste and then whisk it into a simmering pan sauce. One thing you shouldn't do with flour is toss it directly into hot liquid—the dry granules will likely clump together (the top sidebar on the facing page explains why). To achieve full thickening power and eliminate raw flour taste, flour-thickened mixtures must be brought to a boil and then cooked for about 3 minutes. But don't go overboard with the cooking, because flour thickens more as it cools; as a rule, stop cooking gravies and sauces when they're a bit thinner than their ideal consistency.

cornstarch

is a pure starch derived from corn. It can withstand a good amount of cooking and stirring before it begins to break down. That's why it's frequently used for thickening vanilla pastry cream, banana-cream pie filling, as well as butterscotch and chocolate puddings, all of which are cooked on the stove and involve prolonged heating and stirring.

Appearance: Cornstarch-thickened sauces have a translucent shimmer.

When to use: Cornstarch is great for delicate sauces and gravies that you want to be translucent, like stir-fry sauces. It's also a good choice for berry and stone-fruit pies, because it won't cloud the jewel-like colors of the fruit juices. Since it can handle a good amount of heat, it's fine for stove-top puddings and sauces that will be reheated.

When not to use: Don't sprinkle it directly into hot pan juices for gravy because it will clump.

How to use: More than any other starch, cornstarch is prone to clumping when exposed to hot liquids. To avoid lumps, mix cornstarch with something that will help separate the granules from one another. For pies and custards, combine it with the sugar for better dispersion. For sauces, mix the cornstarch with a tablespoon or two of the liquid called for in the recipe—the liquid should be cool. Simmer the sauce for at least a minute to eliminate the pasty flavor of raw starch.

tapioca

tapioca is a pure starch derived from the root of the cassava plant, and it comes in many forms. The small granules of pearl tapioca, labeled instant or quick cooking (Minute Tapioca is a common brand), are widely available and work well as a thickener. There's also a powdered variety, which dissolves more smoothly than the granules but is hard to find; I get it at health-food stores.

Appearance: Tapioca-thickened fillings are crystal clear and have a more jelly-like consistency than those thickened with other starches. Instant tapioca granules don't completely dissolve; they may linger in pie fillings as soft, clear beads.

When to use: It thickens juices faster than flour or cornstarch, so tapioca is great for all fruit pies, especially berry, peach, and rhubarb, which throw off a lot of juice. It's also great for pies that will be frozen and reheated, because tapioca holds liquid, so the pie filling won't weep when frozen and thawed.

When not to use: Don't use instant tapioca for pies with open lattices or large steam vents because the granules will be exposed directly to the hot air of the oven and won't dissolve. It's also not ideal for pan sauces or stovetop custards because it can't withstand a lot of stirring and boiling.

How to use: For best results, let pearl tapioca sit with the fruit for 5 to 10 minutes before you bake the pie so that the fruit juices can begin to soften the granules. And before you remove a pie from the oven, make sure the juices at the center are bubbling, even if it seems the juices at the edge have been fully cooked for quite a while.

How to substitute one starch for another

When I started researching starch-substitution guidelines, I discovered so many inconsistencies from one book to the next that I decided to conduct my own experiment, and here's what I found:

2 Tbs. flour = 1 Tbs. cornstarch =

**1 Tbs. tapioca = 1 Tbs. + 1½ tsp. arrowroot
= 1½ tsp. potato starch**

What causes lumpy gravies and sauces?

Because starches swell and gelatinize at warm temperatures, it's not a good idea to sprinkle them directly into hot liquids. The outer edges of the powdered starch will gelatinize instantly, virtually sealing off the rest of the starch and resulting in lumps. In essence, the outer surface of the starch cooks before the starch has a chance to disperse and dissolve in the liquid. To prevent lumps, stir the starch into a small of amount of cool water, then stir this starch slurry into the hot liquid you want to thicken.

Discovering potato starch and arrowroot

Writing this article gave me an excuse to experiment with a couple starches that I hadn't used much before, potato starch and arrowroot. They're both wonderful thickeners, and I hope you'll give them a try, too.

Potato starch is most commonly called for in European recipes. It's easy to find in the baking ingredient aisle of East Coast markets, but in the rest of the country, look for it in the kosher section of the store. Potato starch thickens quickly without a pronounced flavor that needs to be cooked off, which makes it great as a last-minute fix for too-thin sauces.

Arrowroot powder comes from the root of a tropical plant of the same name. Look for it in gourmet or health-food stores. Arrowroot starch granules are very small and make sauces exceptionally smooth. Like flour and cornstarch, it can withstand long cooking and higher temperatures, and like tapioca, it is remarkable for its clarity. It's a great choice for stir-fry sauces and any kind of fruit pie filling.

Nicole Rees is a baker and food scientist based in Portland, Oregon. ♦

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BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

what's new

Easy-access wall oven

While roasting turkeys for the roasting pan review on pp. 38–39, we discovered that we'd like to redesign the doors of our test kitchen's double wall oven. The doors open downward, and with the upper oven in particular, this set-up is troublesome: Time and again, we found ourselves leaning awkwardly over the hot door, trying to reach in and baste the turkey without getting burned and wondering why someone hadn't come up with a better door design.

Turns out, someone has: Jade Appliances recently introduced the industry's first French-door wall oven for the home kitchen. Jade has long been making commercial French-door ovens for restaurants, and professional chefs love the design because it allows the cook to get close to the food. The design is also



ideal for small spaces because the doors don't need much clearance to open. And don't worry that you'll need two free hands to open the doors—they work in tandem; pull on one and both will open.

The price for a double wall oven with French doors on top starts at about \$5,300. To learn more about the oven's features and to find a retailer, visit JadeAppliances.com.



Comfort underfoot

With this cushy gel-filled mat underfoot, long hours in the kitchen fly by in comfort. The Gel Pro Chef's Mat is much more chic than chunky restaurant mats and easier to clean. The mat looks as if it's made of woven leather—it had me fooled at first—but its surface is stain-resistant synthetic leather with an embossed basketweave texture. The mat comes in a variety of neutral colors and in two sizes: the 20x36-inch mat is \$99.95, and the 20x72-inch mat is \$199.95 at LetsGel.com.

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate

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3 Cool Tools for Pie Lovers



a tool to change your life

Dough will never stick again

If there's one little thing you can do to improve your relationship with pie dough, it's this: Get a pastry cloth and rolling pin cover. We've tried all the tricks that are supposed to make rolling out pie dough easier—from waxed paper to silicone mats to ice-filled rolling pins and pastry boards—and none can beat the simplicity, economy, and effectiveness of this old-fashioned

duo. (Many thanks to author Carole Walter, "Perfecting Apple Pie," p. 64, for introducing us to this amazing tool.) To use, just rub flour into the canvas cloth and the stretchy rolling-pin sleeve and you're ready to go. The fabric absorbs excess flour and prevents dough from sticking. You can buy a pastry cloth and rolling pin cover for \$4.95 at Cooking.com.

why I love it

Red-clay pie plate

I've used earthenware pie plates before, but this hand-thrown red-clay plate takes the cake (or should I say pie?). I love its smooth unglazed surface, its clean lines, and its extra depth. I also love how every pie I bake in it—even the juiciest of fruit pies—develops a gorgeously browned, crisp bottom crust. Missouri-based potter Tom Hess crafts the deep-dish plates one at a time, and they're available for \$30 each, plus shipping, at HessPottery.com.

test drive

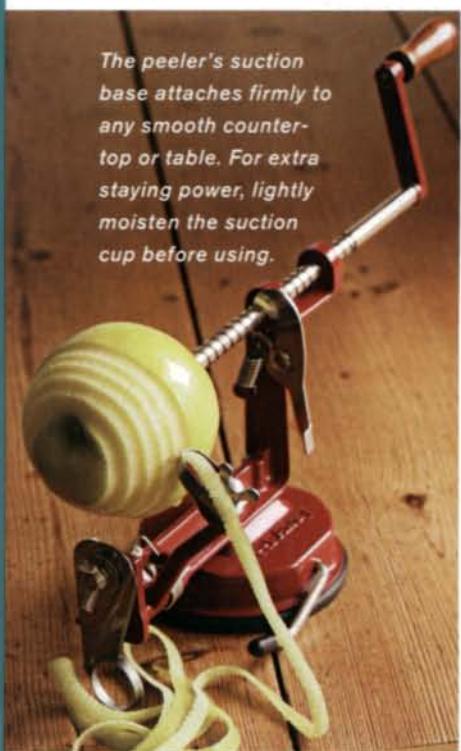
Turbo peeler

I used to work at a German pastry shop where I had to peel a few crates of apples everyday for strudel and kuchen, and I was extremely grateful to have a contraption like the one on the left to help me with the task. Since then, whenever I've peeled apples with a vegetable peeler or paring knife, I've thought back on that gadget and wondered: Should I get one for home?

Well, I recently took the cast-iron Peel Away Peeler with a suction base from Back to Basics for a spin, and the short answer to my question is this: While the tool doesn't qualify as a kitchen essential, if you have to peel a lot of apples or potatoes (yes, it does taters, too), this little machine will save you time and effort and amuse you in the process. It can handily shave the peel off an apple or potato in about four seconds, and there's something satisfying about watching the peel fall away in a long skinny strip as you crank the handle.

I was interested in the machine as a peeler only, but it also has an attachment that lets you simultaneously peel, core, and slice an apple into perfect ¼-inch-thick slices. You can use the attachment to slice a potato into a spiral for curly fries as well.

When you first pull the little contraption out of the box, it's somewhat bewildering, but if you set aside five minutes to read the instructions and familiarize yourself with its anatomy, you'll be peeling away in no time. Just be sure to heed the manufacturer's advice and use firm fruit only. During my apple-peeling trials, the peeler never stumbled, but when I tried a ripe pear the blade sank into the flesh and got stuck. I suggest you avoid soft apple varieties, such as McIntosh, as well. The peeler is \$24.95 at Cooking.com.



The peeler's suction base attaches firmly to any smooth countertop or table. For extra staying power, lightly moisten the suction cup before using.

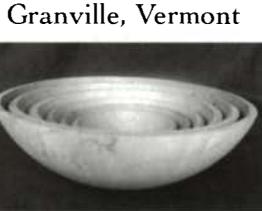


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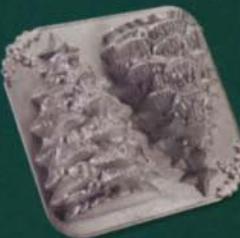
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Everything you need for your Thanksgiving turkey

A heavy-duty roasting pan tops our list of Thanksgiving essentials (to learn about our favorite pans, see the review on p. 38), but here are the other tools we can't live without. And they're not just for Turkey Day—many of these versatile tools will come in handy anytime a roast is on the menu.

Carving board

A special-occasion roast deserves a roomy, heavy-duty carving board with a groove to catch the flavorful juices. At 24x18 inches, this reversible hard maple board (model AUJUS) from John Boos is big enough for the largest of turkeys; it sells for about \$100 at ChefDepot.com. Boos also offers a smaller 18x12-inch grooved board (model BBQBD) for \$55.95 at SurLaTable.com.

Carving knife and fork

There's nothing wrong with heirloom-worthy carving sets for special occasions. But we'd rather invest in a sharp, versatile slicing knife that can go from carving holiday roasts to slicing tomatoes, steaks, melons, and more on a daily basis. MAC's Superior Slicing Knife (model SF-85) is as handsome as it is practical, and the responsive blade delivers a clean, precise cut. At 8 1/4 inches, it's a tad shorter than the average carving knife, but we feel the shorter length gives better control. Although a carving fork is optional, your guests will probably be grateful if you use one (instead of your hand) to steady your roast as you carve. The knife sells for \$54.95 and the fork for \$22.95 at CutleryAndMore.com.

Roasting rack

A rack elevates the bird, allowing the oven's heat to envelop it and brown it nicely. We like this non-stick roasting rack by Calphalon because its handles are on the sides, which makes

it easier to lift out of a roasting pan than a rack with handles on the ends. The large rack (15x10 1/2 inches) is \$12.59 at Amazon.com.

Brining bag

The main trouble with brining turkey is finding a container large enough to hold the bird. This brining bag from Grill Friends solves that problem. The single-use bag can hold up to a 20-pound turkey and sells for \$7.95 at FamousFoods.com.

Baster

Cuisipro's new dual baster comes with two interchangeable heads: One injects juices directly into the meat, and the other showers your turkey with juices. The baster sells for \$12.99 at CooksCorner.com.

Instant-read thermometer

CDN's new ProAccurate Quick Tip digital pocket thermometer gives a quick, precise temperature reading. And you can trust its accuracy because this thermometer, unlike most digital thermometers, can be recalibrated. The thermometer (model Q2-450) sells for \$19.95 at KitchenKaboodle.com.



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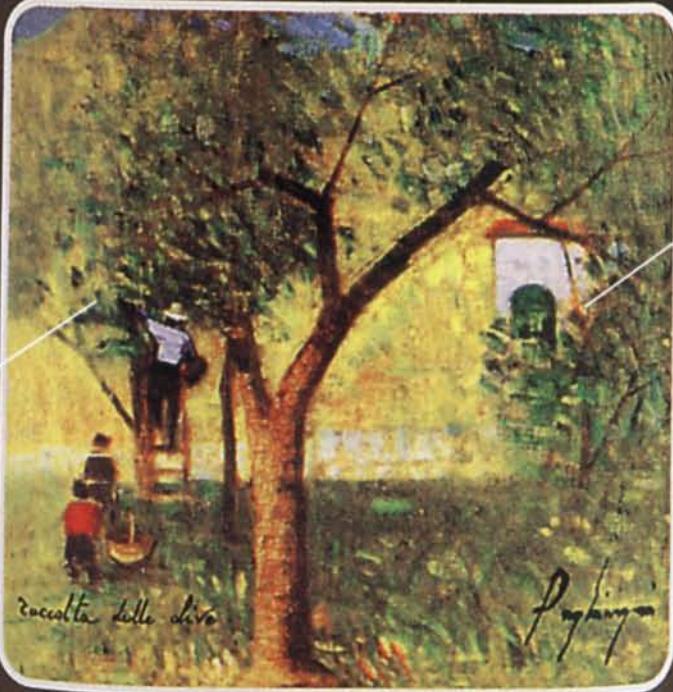
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review

Roasting Pans

the best
of the
best

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

For this roasting pan review, we set the bar high, limiting the lineup to heavy-duty stainless-steel roasters. No lightweight or nonstick models this time around. Because all the pans were high quality and had so much in common, we thought at the outset that they might all perform equally well. But after putting the pans through their paces, the four roasters shown here ultimately distinguished themselves as the best of the best.

We began our tests by roasting turkeys, a classic task for a large, heavy-duty roaster. Had we stopped there, it would have been hard to pick a winner because each turkey from each pan roasted to perfection. Forging ahead with our tests—making gravy, searing a roast on the stovetop, and browning another in a high-heat oven—we experienced the “aha!” results that weeded out the great pans from the good ones. These tasks really tested the pans’ ability to conduct heat.

During gravy-making, the best pans browned the roux evenly and simmered the



KitchenAid

\$149.99 at [ShopKitchenAid.com](#)

15x11½ inches

One of the smallest of the large roasters in our review, this pan is one of KitchenAid’s “best-kept secrets,” as a company spokesperson aptly put it. It took the heat beautifully when searing roasts in a hot oven and on the stovetop, developing a rich, amber-brown crust where the roast came in contact with the pan. It’s five-ply stainless clad, meaning two outer layers of stainless steel are bonded to an aluminum core by two metal alloy layers. This pan comes with a roasting rack.

Mauviel Cook Style

\$199.95 at [Cooking.com](#)

15¾ x12 inches

Here’s the secret recipe to this terrific pan: three layers of hard-to-scratch, easy-to-clean, stainless steel; three layers of aluminum for first-rate heat conduction; and a magnetic stainless steel layer for induction cooking. Use it in the oven or on the stovetop, and you’ll get terrific results, be it a Thanksgiving turkey or a holiday rib roast.



How we tested

We limited our tests to large roasting pans (15 to 17 inches in length) under \$275 with sides at least 3 inches high, fixed handles (welded or riveted), and stainless-steel finishes. In each pan we roasted a 12-pound turkey, made gravy from the turkey drippings, seared a London broil roast over two medium-high flames (roasters were heated empty for 40 seconds before adding the oil-coated roasts), and finally, browned a top-round roast for 20 minutes in a 500°F oven.

Besides turkey, we use a large roaster for big cuts like leg of lamb or prime rib, roasting two chickens or numerous game hens at once, and browning roasts or even large batches of stew meat on the stovetop.

gravy gently without signs of hot spots—no frantic whisking or heat adjustments necessary. And during stove-top and high-heat oven searing, the best pans held steady and browned the roasts evenly, while the worst pans smoked and—*thwap!*—buckled.

Admittedly, we were surprised to see hefty stainless-steel pans warp. But a little research helped us understand why. Although stainless steel is a great metal for a pan's interior and exterior surfaces (because it's nonreactive, durable, and easy to clean), it's not the best heat conductor. To improve

conductivity, manufacturers sandwich at least one layer of a good heat-conducting metal, such as aluminum, between the interior and exterior layers of steel. A pan's ability to conduct heat evenly and at a controlled rate—the key to preventing warping—depends on the composition and gauge of the aluminum layer, or layers, as well as whether it's located both in the base and up the pan's sides. The manufacturers I talked to didn't want to disclose the precise composition of their pans' cores, but it didn't matter. The proof of quality was in the performance.



Viking

\$274.95 at ChefsResource.com
16x13 inches

Everything about this pan is impressive—its size, its solidity, its performance. Made of seven-ply stainless steel—including three layers of aluminum alloys and a magnetic layer on top for induction cooktops—it conducted heat extremely well. Its generous size is handy for those 18-pound turkeys or for roasting extra vegetables alongside a bird or roast, but it might be too large for some ovens (you'll want 2 inches clearance between the sides of the pan and your oven's walls). A roasting rack is included.

Sur La Table

\$99.95 at SurLaTable.com
17x12½ inches

This "tri-ply" stainless-steel roaster (stainless-steel interior and exterior with an aluminum core) is a stand-out pan that's relatively easy on the pocketbook. In our tests, it held up beautifully to stress, deeply and evenly browning a roast in a 500°F oven and never buckling over a medium-high stovetop flame. This pan can be cleaned in a dishwasher.



Maryellen Driscoll is Fine Cooking's editor at large. ♦

We also tested stainless roasters by All-Clad, Anolon, Calphalon, Cuisinart, and Matfer Bourgeat.



Winning tip

Reduce liquids to a precise amount

If a recipe calls for reducing a liquid to a specific amount (say, one cup), pour one cup of water in the pan you'll be using and mark the water level on the handle of an upright wooden spoon by scoring it lightly with a paring knife. Pour out the water and use the same pot to reduce the liquid until it reaches the mark on the spoon.

—Diane McCann, Flower Mound, Texas

A prize for the best tip

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The prize for this issue's winner: A Swiss Diamond diamond-reinforced 9½-inch nonstick sauté pan; value, \$138.



Keep fresh vegetable leftovers together

Many recipes require only small amounts of whole vegetables, leaving me with perfectly good scraps—a quarter of a cucumber, a piece of red pepper, half a carrot—that usually wind up forgotten in a corner of the refrigerator. Now, I wrap vegetable leftovers in plastic and collect them in a small basket or dish in the fridge. They're less likely to get wasted because they're assembled in one place, and when I need to make a salad in a pinch, I have plenty of add-ins from which to choose.

—Helene L. Stone, Highland Park, Illinois

Keep carved turkey slices moist

Just before I carve my Thanksgiving turkey, I carefully remove the skin from the breast, trying to keep it in one piece. When I finish carving and slicing the breast meat, I cover it with the piece of roasted skin. This helps the meat stay warm and moist. I remove the skin just before serving.

—Irene Moretti,
Ridgeville, Ontario

Use parchment to pour flour

Whenever I made layer cakes that called for adding dry and wet ingredients alternately, I ended up with a mess. Now, I mix my liquid ingredients in a measuring cup, which makes pouring a cinch, and I sift my dry ingredients onto a sheet of parchment. Then I fold up the ends to create a chute that makes it easy to pour flour into

(continued on p. 42)

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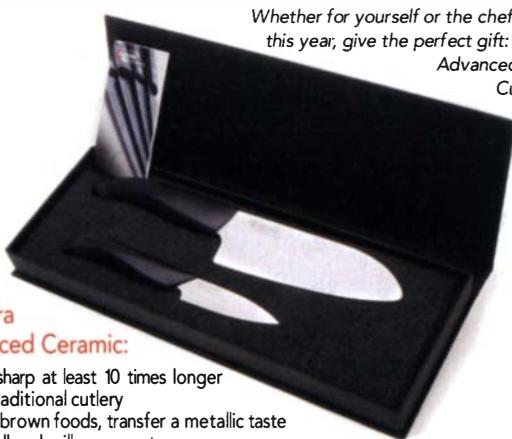
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A potato masher breaks up ground meat easily

When browning ground meat or sausage out of its casings, I use a potato masher to break up the larger pieces as soon as they start to brown and firm up a little. It's much quicker than using a wooden spoon or spatula, and I get more even results.

—Rebecca Morgan, Pasadena, California

the mixing bowl. It saves me from washing an extra bowl, and I can reuse the parchment.

—Nikki Elkins,
New York, New York

Heat dinner plates quickly in the microwave

In the winter, cold dinner plates cause the food that's on them to cool quickly. Instead of warming them in the oven, I stack the plates and put them in the microwave for about two minutes before serving (the time may vary depending on your microwave and the type and number of plates). This way, I get warm plates without having to wait for the oven to heat.

—Anne Modery,
Naperville, Illinois

Defat stock with plastic wrap

When I make chicken or meat stock, I cover the pot with plastic wrap, press it down so the plastic touches the liquid surface, and put the pot in the fridge for a few hours. As the stock cools, the fat rises to the top and sticks to the plastic. All I do is peel off the plastic, and the fat comes right off with it.

—Annmarie Barvenik,
Trumbull, Connecticut

Prevent flour specks on chocolate cakes

When greasing and flouring a cake pan for a chocolate cake, I mix cocoa with the flour. This prevents the "white dusting" that sometimes shows on the bottom and sides of the cake if you use only flour.

—Deborah Pascuzzi,
Placitas, New Mexico ♦

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Fiesta Shrimp Appetizer



Ingredients

- 1 jar CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Zesty Shrimp or Seafood Sauce
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 pound cooked shrimp, chopped
- 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted & chopped
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 jalapeno chile pepper, seeded & minced

Directions

Spread cream cheese over a large platter; top with Shrimp Sauce. Sprinkle with remaining ingredients. Cover and chill until served.



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Minted Blueberry Fruit Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1 cup sliced peaches
- 1/2 cantaloupe, cut into 1" pieces
- 1/2 cup CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Mint Flavored Apple Jelly



- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- lettuce

Directions

Toss together blueberries, peaches and cantaloupe. Heat jelly over low heat until texture is smooth. Whisk mayonnaise and vinegar into jelly; blend until smooth. Place lettuce in a large serving bowl; top with fruit; drizzle with dressing and serve immediately.



Our delicate Mint Flavored Apple Jelly is the secret to sophisticated sauces and delicious dressings.

Mango Chutney Stir Fry



Ingredients

- 1 jar CROSSE & BLACKWELL® Hot Mango Chutney
- 2 tablespoons hot chili oil
- 1 pound fresh jumbo shrimp, peeled & deveined
- 1 cup pea pods
- 1 cup onions
- 1 teaspoon garlic, chopped
- 1/2 cup stir-fry sauce
- 2 tablespoons cashews

Directions

Heat chili oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry shrimp for 3 minutes or until pink. Remove shrimp from pan. Add pea pods, onions and garlic to skillet along with stir-fry sauce and sauté for 5 to 10 minutes. Add Chutney and the cooked shrimp. Heat through. Sprinkle with optional cashews and serve.

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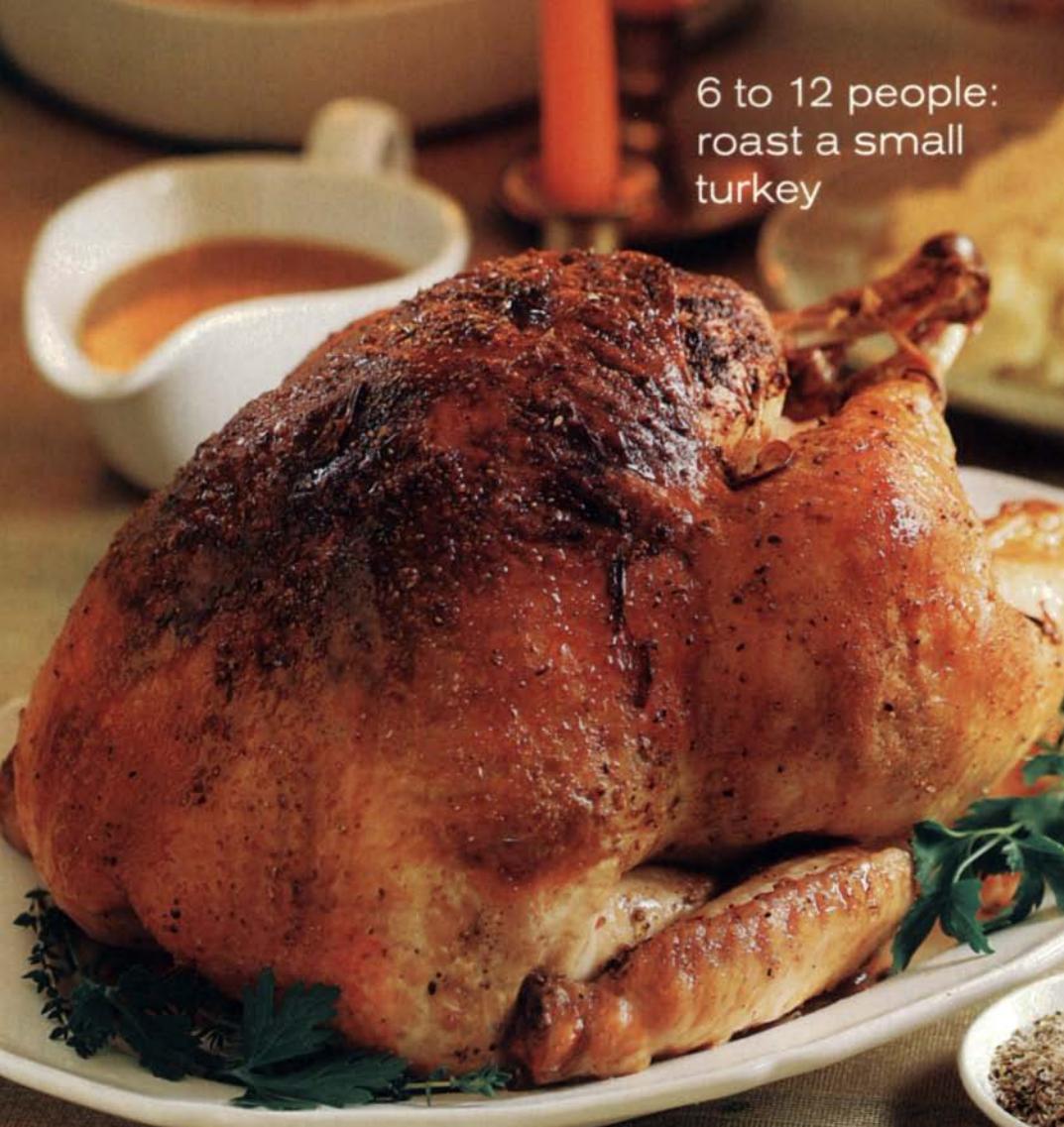


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6 to 12 people:
roast a small
turkey



Three Ideas for a

Whether you're cooking for a small crowd or just a couple of friends, chef Tom Douglas has you covered

BY TOM DOUGLAS

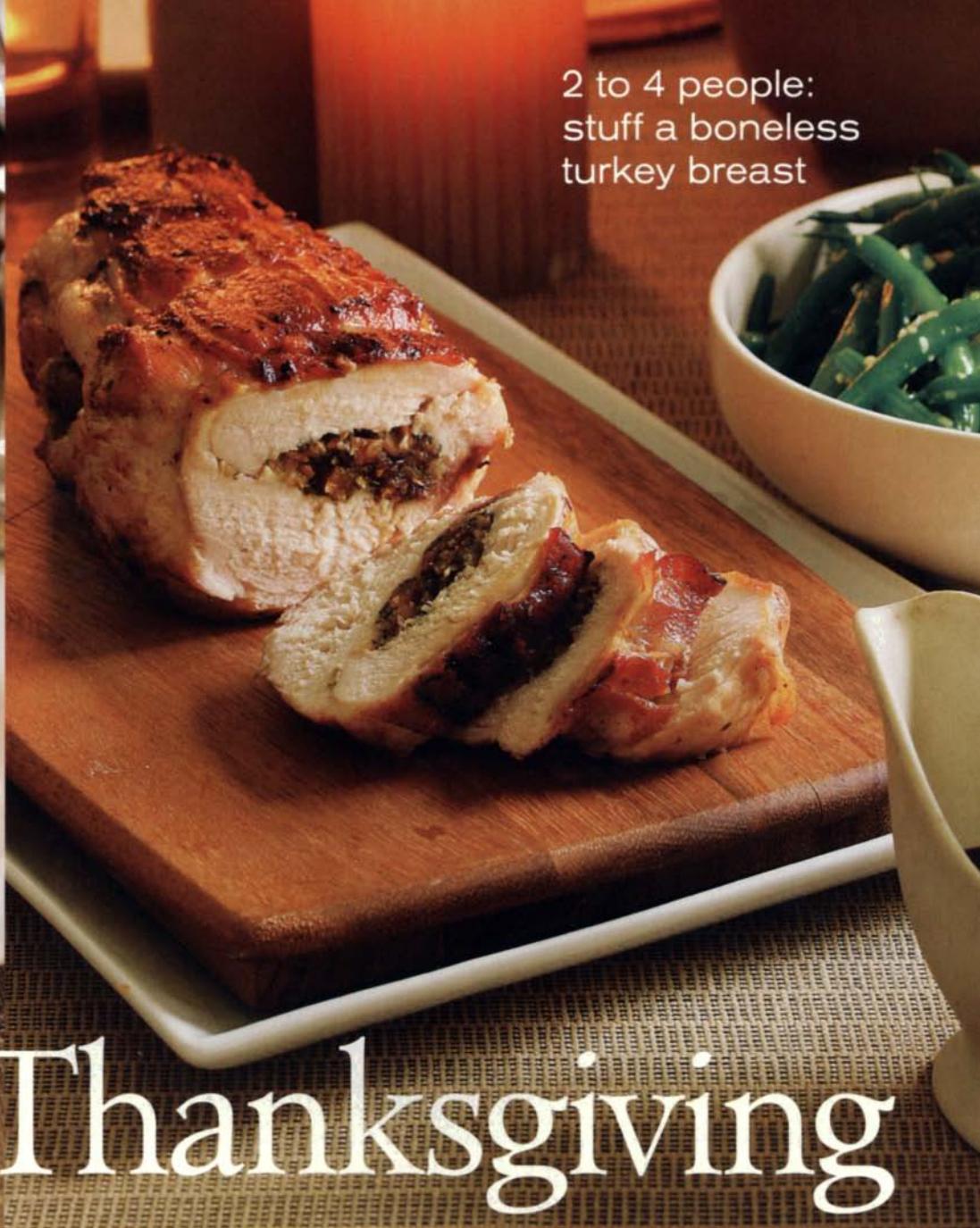
I grew up with six sisters and a brother, so it never occurred to me that Thanksgiving dinner could be for fewer than 20 people. Only later on, when I moved across the country and got married, did my favorite food holiday turn into an affair for two—or maybe four.

My first "small" Thanksgiving turkey was about 18 pounds—much smaller than my mother's usual 25-pound monsters—but obviously way too big for two, even counting leftovers. By our second Thanksgiving together, my wife and I were down to a 12-pound bird, which is the turkey size I stick to when I don't have many people coming over. But there are other delicious options for a soul-satisfying turkey supper for small groups. If you're cooking for only two to four people, stuffing and roasting a boneless turkey breast

4 to 6 people:
roast a large
chicken



2 to 4 people:
stuff a boneless
turkey breast



Small Thanksgiving

is an elegant solution (p. 49). And if your gathering grows to six, try roasting a large chicken with a sweet cranberry glaze for a festive holiday touch (p. 50).

Smaller turkeys are easier to cook than 25-pound behemoths, and their meat is more likely to stay moist while the skin crisps up nicely. In fact, even if you're cooking for a large group, you're better off roasting two medium turkeys than the biggest turkey you can find.

I roast all my birds untrussed and unstuffed because they cook more quickly and evenly. Aromatics, such as lemon zest, garlic cloves, and thyme sprigs can go into the cavity, but in my house, the stuffing goes into a dish to be baked separately. This way, I get a far superior stuffing: moist inside, with a crunchy surface (see "Bread Stuffings," p. 51).

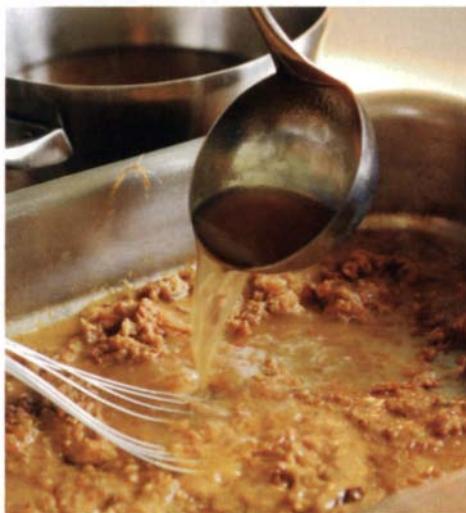
I also prefer not to truss my turkeys and chickens so the heat circulates better, but for a neater look, it's fine to tie the legs loosely. Don't forget to let your roasted bird rest 10 to 20 minutes before carving to give the juices time to settle.

I prefer to buy organic, free-range birds and, if frozen, thaw them in the fridge (for turkey sources, see p. 92). I've made a choice to use organic ingredients in my restaurant and home kitchens to be a little easier on the earth. I also find that when animals roam freely, the meat has more intense flavor and better texture. If you buy a frozen bird, make sure you get it at least three days ahead and thaw it in the refrigerator rather than under cold running water. The fridge maintains a consistent and safe temperature throughout the bird, and slow thawing helps preserve its texture.

For up to 12 people, roast a small turkey and flavor



This roast turkey may be one of the most succulent and unusual you've ever tasted. I make a flavored butter with smoked paprika and toasted ground fennel seed and rub it under the skin of the turkey to keep the breast moist and juicy. Then I season the bird inside and out with a fennel-seed salt. The turkey roasts on a bed of onions, which brown very slowly, bathing in the pan drippings and becoming wonderfully soft and fragrant—the perfect foundation for a rich, flavorful gravy that's robust and chunky with shreds of sweet, caramelized onion.



Stir flour into the roasting pan with the onions and drippings, then add turkey broth a ladleful at a time for a rich onion gravy.

Make-ahead tips

Make the **turkey broth** a day ahead and keep it covered and refrigerated.

Make the **paprika-fennel butter** a few days ahead. Keep it in the refrigerator but bring it to room temperature before using.

Make the **fennel salt** a few days ahead and store it tightly covered at room temperature.

Turkey Broth

Yields 5 to 6 cups.

I use the turkey neck, tail, wing tips, and giblets to make a turkey-enriched chicken broth, which is the foundation of the gravy. Make the broth while the turkey is roasting or a day ahead if you like.

2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Turkey neck, wing tips, tail, and giblets (excluding the liver)

½ cup dry white wine

8 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth

½ medium onion, coarsely chopped

½ medium carrot, coarsely chopped

½ medium celery stalk, coarsely chopped

8 black peppercorns

2 parsley sprigs

1 bay leaf

Heat the oil in a 3- or 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the turkey parts and brown them well on all sides, 8 to 10 minutes. Pour in the wine and use a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the broth, onion, carrot, celery, peppercorns, parsley, and bay leaf and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low or low and simmer the broth gently for 1 hour, skimming off the scum occasionally with a skimmer or a large slotted spoon. Strain the broth through a sieve and discard the solids. Let the broth cool and spoon off the fat.

it with smoky paprika and fennel seed.

Smoked Paprika & Fennel Seed Roast Turkey with Onion Gravy

Serves ten to twelve, or six to eight with leftovers.

Be sure to use a flameproof roasting pan (see p. 38 for our picks) so it can go directly over the burner when it's time to make the gravy. You can find pimentón, Spanish smoked paprika, in specialty stores or see p. 92 for mail-order sources.

FOR THE SMOKED PAPRIKA AND FENNEL SEED BUTTER:

**6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted and ground (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 84)
1 tablespoon sweet pimentón (Spanish smoked paprika)
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves (save the stems for the turkey cavity)
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

FOR THE TURKEY:

**4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1 large onion (about 12 ounces), peeled and thinly sliced
1 11- to 12-pound turkey, trimmed of excess fat
1 recipe Fennel Salt (at right)
6 cloves garlic, peeled
Zest of 1 lemon, removed in long strips with a vegetable peeler
4 large sprigs thyme, plus the stems from the chopped thyme above**

FOR THE ONION GRAVY:

**7 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4½ to 5 cups turkey broth, hot (see recipe, facing page)**

Make the paprika-fennel butter: Put the butter in a small bowl. Add the fennel seeds, paprika, thyme, salt, and pepper, and mix until well blended. Set aside at room temperature (refrigerate if making ahead).

Prepare the turkey: Position a rack in the lowest part of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Brush a large flameproof roasting pan lightly with 1 tablespoon of the melted butter. Make a bed of the onions in the center of the pan.

Trim off the wing tips at the first joint and, if already loose, trim the tail from the turkey. Remove the giblets (discard the liver) and neck and set them aside with the wing tips and tail for making the broth (recipe at left). Rinse the turkey and pat it dry with paper towels.

Set the turkey on a work surface and loosen the skin over the breasts by sliding

your hands under the skin. Rub all of the paprika-fennel butter under the skin, smearing it over the breast. Brush the turkey skin all over with the remaining 3 tablespoons melted butter. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of the Fennel Salt all over the skin of the turkey (sprinkle a little inside the cavity, too). Place the garlic cloves, lemon zest, and thyme sprigs inside the cavity. If you like, tuck the legs into the tail flap (or tie them together loosely if there is no flap).

Set the turkey, breast side up, on top of the onions in the roasting pan (there is no need for a rack). Roast for 1 hour and then baste the turkey with the drippings that have collected in the pan and rotate the pan. Continue to roast, basting every 20 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of both thighs reads 170°F, 1½ to 2 hours more. (If the turkey is browning too much, tent it with foil.) Set the turkey on a large platter to rest, tented with foil, for about 20 minutes while you make the gravy.

Make the gravy: Set the roasting pan with the onions and juices over medium-high heat (it may need to straddle two burners, depending on your stove). With a wooden spoon, stir up any browned bits stuck to the bottom of the pan and continue stirring for a few minutes, allowing the onions to brown a little more. Sprinkle the flour evenly over the onions and juices and stir until the flour is well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. Start adding the broth, 1 ladleful at a time, whisking out the lumps before you add more broth. Continue to add broth gradually, whisking each time until smooth, until you've added about 4½ cups of broth. Add any juices that have collected on the platter around the turkey. Lower the heat to medium or medium low and gently simmer the gravy, whisking occasionally, until it's full-flavored and thickened, 8 to 10 minutes. If it seems too thick, add the remaining ½ cup broth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Keep warm until ready to serve, then transfer to a gravy boat.

Carve the turkey. Pass the gravy boat and the remaining fennel salt at the table.

WINE SUGGESTIONS A rich, fruity Australian Grenache blend would complement the herbal notes in this recipe. Try the 2004 Oxford Landing Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre (\$8) or the Penfolds Bin 138 Old Vines Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre, Barossa Valley (\$18).



Fennel Salt

Yields about 5 tablespoons.

I often use this as a finishing salt—a flavored salt you can sprinkle on meat or fish after it's cooked and sliced so you get a bit of seasoning with every bite. But it's also a great seasoning to sprinkle on a turkey or chicken before roasting.

**3 tablespoons kosher or sea salt
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted and ground (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 84)
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper**

Combine the salt, fennel, and pepper in a small bowl. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the mixture for sprinkling on the turkey and transfer the rest to a couple of small, shallow dishes for passing at the table.

Video

See how to carve a turkey at finecooking.com

A boneless turkey breast stuffed with sweet, nutty

If you're having only a couple of people over, my stuffed boneless turkey breast is a perfect solution; it feels special, keeps with the turkey tradition, and cooks quickly. I've devised a stuffing of dates, dried apricots, toasted hazelnuts, and fresh sage. The sweetness of the dried fruit makes a harmonious combo with the turkey. I like to tie a couple of strips of bacon onto the stuffed turkey breast with kitchen twine. The bacon adds some much needed fat to the lean white meat and helps keep it moist. The breast roasts in just 40 minutes and, instead of gravy, a simple Marsala wine reduction is easy and quite delicious.



Slice open the turkey breast horizontally, working from the thicker side of the lobe to the thinner.

Open the breast and spread the stuffing over half of it, leaving a border around the outer edge.

Place two slices of bacon lengthwise on top and tie the breast crosswise in several places.

flavors is perfect for just 2 or 4.

Dried Apricot & Date Stuffed Turkey Breast with Marsala Glaze

Serves four, or two with leftovers.

If you buy a boneless half turkey breast, it will probably be skinless. You may see bone-in, skin-on breasts as well; either ask your butcher to bone it for you, or bone it yourself following the instructions on p. 87.

FOR THE STUFFING:

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1/3 cup finely chopped onion
1/3 cup pitted and coarsely chopped dried dates
1/4 cup coarsely chopped dried apricots
3 tablespoons toasted and chopped hazelnuts (see photo tip, right)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TURKEY BREAST:

1 boneless, skinless or skin-on turkey breast half (1 3/4 to 2 pounds)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 slices thick-sliced bacon (about 3 ounces)
1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 1/2 cups sweet Marsala wine

Make the stuffing: Melt the butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until soft and lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Set aside to cool. Put the dates and apricots in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add the hazelnuts, parsley, sage, and reserved onions and pulse a few more times until everything is minced and well combined. Transfer to a small bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Prepare the turkey breast: Heat the oven to 350°F. Put the turkey breast on a cutting board and, holding your knife parallel to the work surface, slice open the turkey breast horizontally, working from the thicker side of the lobe to the thinner side and not cutting all the way through (see the photos on the facing page). Open the turkey breast like a book and season generously with salt and pepper.

Spread the stuffing evenly over half the opened turkey breast, leaving a little border around the outer edges. Fold the other half of the turkey breast over the stuffing, enclosing the stuffing as much as possible. Lay the ba-

con lengthwise on top of the turkey breast and tie the breast crosswise with kitchen string in four or five places to hold it all together.

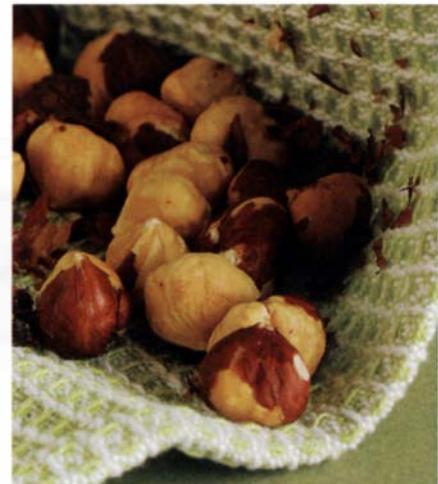
Season the turkey on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 12-inch oven-proof skillet over medium-high heat. Beginning with the bacon side down, sear the turkey breast on both sides until nicely browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer the skillet to the oven (the turkey should be bacon side up) and roast for 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, flip the turkey breast, return to the oven, and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the breast reads 165°F, 20 to 30 minutes more.

Remove the pan from the oven, transfer the turkey to a large plate and let it rest, loosely covered with foil, for about 10 minutes.

While the turkey is resting, make the Marsala glaze: Pour off the fat from the skillet and discard any lumps of stuffing that may have fallen out of the turkey and burned. Put the skillet over medium-high heat, pour the Marsala in the skillet, and bring it to a boil, stirring with a wooden spatula to scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Add to the pan any juices that have collected around the turkey while resting on the plate. Continue boiling until the Marsala is reduced to 1/4 cup, 5 to 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the strings from the turkey. Slice the turkey crosswise into 1/2-inch slices and arrange the slices on a serving platter. Pour the Marsala glaze into a small bowl and pass with the turkey.

WINE SUGGESTIONS Try a fruity white with crisp acidity such as a Pinot Gris. The 2005 A to Z Pinot Gris (\$14) or the 2005 Elk Cove Pinot Gris (\$16), both from Oregon, are good options.



HOW TO TOAST AND SKIN HAZELNUTS

You'll need 3 tablespoons toasted, skinned, chopped hazelnuts for the turkey breast stuffing, so start with a scant 1/4 cup whole nuts to be sure you have enough. Heat the oven to 375°F and toast the whole nuts on a baking sheet until fragrant and lightly browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Hazelnuts have thin, papery skins, which can burn, so watch carefully. After roasting, remove as much of the skin as you can by rubbing the warm nuts in a clean dishtowel.

Make-ahead tips

Make the stuffing several hours or a day ahead, cover, and refrigerate.

Stuff and tie the turkey breast up to 6 hours ahead and keep it refrigerated.



A large roasted chicken glazed with cranberries serves 6 nicely.

A large roasted chicken is a good choice for serving four to six people. To give it a little Thanksgiving flair, I brush it with a cranberry-honey glaze during the last half hour of roasting. The sugar in the honey and the red color from the cranberries help the chicken brown to a beautiful burnished glow, and the slightly sweet skin is a nice complement to the juicy chicken meat. I serve the chicken with an uncooked cranberry relish that's fresh tasting and a breeze to make. Rice vinegar adds tang and keeps the relish from being cloying.

Cranberry-Honey-Glazed Chicken

Serves four to six.

FOR THE CRANBERRY-HONEY GLAZE:

- 4 ounces (1 cup) fresh or frozen cranberries, picked through and rinsed
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme leaves (reserve the stems for the chicken cavity)

FOR THE CHICKEN:

- 1 5-pound chicken
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large shallot, peeled and halved
- 1 recipe Fresh Cranberry Relish (see above)

Make the cranberry-honey glaze: Combine the cranberries, honey, and vinegar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then turn down the heat to medium and simmer until the cranberries pop and are very soft, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and pour the mixture into a fine sieve set over a bowl. Use a rubber spatula to force most of the pulp through the sieve, leaving the skins and seeds behind (be sure to get the pulp clinging to the bottom of the sieve). Add the chopped thyme and stir until the glaze is well combined. Set aside to cool and thicken.

Prepare the chicken: Position a rack in the lowest part of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Set a V-rack in a foil-lined medium or large roasting pan. Trim the excess fat from the chicken and clean out the cavity. Tuck the wing tips behind the neck and set the chicken on a tray or cutting board. Put the shallot and reserved thyme stems in the cav-

Fresh Cranberry Relish

Serves four to six.

- 12 ounces (3 cups) fresh or frozen cranberries, picked through and rinsed
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest

Combine the cranberries, sugar, vinegar, and orange zest in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer to a bowl, cover, and refrigerate at least 1 hour to develop the flavors.

Make-ahead tips

Make the **glaze** a few days ahead and refrigerate. Return to room temperature before using.

Make the **relish** a day ahead and keep it in the refrigerator.

ity of the chicken. Brush the chicken all over with half of the melted butter. Generously season the chicken all over with salt and pepper, including the cavity. Tie the legs loosely if you want, and set the chicken, breast side up, on the rack in the pan.

Roast on the bottom oven rack for 20 minutes. Baste with the remaining 1½ tablespoons butter and roast for 10 minutes. Stir the glaze to loosen it, then brush the chicken with about half of the glaze. Don't worry if some of the glaze slides off the chicken. Roast for 10 minutes, then brush with the remaining glaze. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh reads 170°F and the juices run clear, 30 to 35 minutes more. The skin should be a caramelized reddish-brown. If any parts of the chicken begin to get too brown before the chicken is done, tent it with foil.

Remove the pan from the oven and tilt the chicken to allow juices in the cavity to drain into the pan. (As long as the thighs have reached 170°F, it's fine if these juices are pink.) Transfer the chicken to a cutting board or platter and let it rest 5 to 10 minutes. Carve and serve with the cranberry relish.

WINE SUGGESTIONS A vibrant, youthful Pinot Noir would match the cranberry notes in the glaze. Look for the 2004 Echelon Pinot Noir, California (\$14) or the 2003 Taz Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara (\$18).

Tom Douglas owns Dahlia Lounge, Lola, Etta's, Palace Kitchen, and Dahlia Bakery in Seattle, Washington. ♦

Bread Stuffing Just the Way You Like It

BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

This six-step formula, plus your choice of bread and add-ins, gives you all the flavor possibilities you'll need for many feasts to come

No holiday is more steeped in the tradition of a meal than Thanksgiving—it's also known as Turkey Day, after all. The problem with tradition is that, though comforting and familiar, it can also be boring. That's why each fall I search for ways to mix it up a little without breaking the tradition of turkey and its trimmings. Sure, you can get creative with the turkey and cranberry sauce, but in the end, they're still turkey and cranberries. So I focus instead on the bread stuffing, and as a result, I've de-

Six steps to

Serves eight to ten.

veloped a formula that lets me concoct any stuffing I can imagine.

The more, the better

The only constant in bread stuffing is the bread, and even then, there are lots of choices. Once you decide on the type of bread, you still have dozens of options for other flavors in the form of add-ins, like nuts, sausage, olives, and all kinds of vegetables, herbs, and spices. That equals hundreds of possible combinations. And with bread stuffing, more is often better, because everything melds together as it cooks to become a unique whole. It's hard to go wrong so long as you try not to combine flavors that would be really weird together, like raisin-walnut bread and oysters, for instance. (For my favorite combinations, see p. 55.)

Moisture is the key

The trick to making a good stuffing is getting the moisture right. In the end, the stuffing should be golden and slightly crisp on top and moist inside. You don't want it to be soggy—or dry. Different types of bread will require different amounts of moisture to achieve this texture. In step four, you'll find advice on how to evaluate and adjust the amount of liquid in the mix.

Cook it outside the bird

In my opinion, stuffing baked outside the bird (also called dressing) is better than stuffing baked inside the bird for several reasons.

I like stuffing with lots of crisp edges, and you don't get that when you bake it inside the bird. The stuffing has

to be exposed to the drying heat of the oven to make it crisp.

Furthermore, the bird cooks faster and more evenly when it isn't stuffed. Filling the cavity keeps heat from entering it, so all the cooking has to happen from the outside in. Plus, for food safety reasons, you have to be sure the stuffing reaches a minimum of 165°F, which might force you to overcook the bird to reach that temperature. You could scoop the stuffing out and continue to bake it separately, but that's a step I'd rather avoid on such a busy cooking day.

Finally, I think both the stuffing and the turkey taste better when they're cooked separately. This is contrary to the logical assumption that juices from the turkey enhance the flavor of the stuffing inside it, but I've done side-by-side experiments and the versions baked separately always taste better. I can't explain it; it just is.

But if you want to stuff the turkey...

I may prefer my stuffing baked outside the turkey, but if your tradition insists on baking the stuffing inside the bird, go ahead and do it. Just cut back on the liquid by a cup or so—the stuffing mixture should be moistened only enough to barely cling together, so that it can still absorb turkey juices. And when you stuff the turkey, don't pack it too full. Leave enough room to fit your hand into the top of the cavity; this will ensure that the stuffing has sufficient space to expand as it cooks.

Master Bread Stuffing Formula

8 to 10 cups 3/4-inch-diced or torn bread (14 to 16 ounces)
4 to 6 cups add-ins
Up to 5 seasonings
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 to 3 cups liquid
2 to 4 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil (optional)
2 large eggs

make ahead:

You can cut your bread cubes a day ahead, then prep the stuffing components and cook the add-ins several hours ahead. Just wait to combine and moisten the stuffing until shortly before you're ready to bake it.

[Download](#) 15 of our favorite Thanksgiving side dish recipes at finecooking.com

perfect bread stuffing



1 Prepare the bread

Bread is the backbone of your stuffing. You can use just about any kind, from white sandwich bread to rustic artisan loaves (see the list below). Except for cornbread, the bread must be dried so it can absorb the flavors of the other ingredients.

Tear or cut the bread into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces until you have 8 to 10 cups. If working a day ahead, lay the pieces out on a rack and leave them uncovered on the counter to dry overnight. Otherwise, spread the bread out on a rimmed baking sheet and bake in a 275°F oven, stirring every 10 minutes or so, until it is crisp and mostly dry; it will continue to dry a bit as it cools. Depending on how moist the bread is to begin with, oven-drying takes 15 to 45 minutes.

Bread choices

Choose 1 type of bread;
8 to 10 cups total

**Any type of
crusty, artisan-
style bread**

Cornbread
(see p. 86 for
recipe; no need
to dry—just cool
and break into
chunks)

French

Italian

Pumpernickel

Rye (seedless)

Sourdough

White sandwich

Whole grain



2 Prepare the add-ins

The add-ins give the stuffing its personality. Celery and onions, shallots, or leeks are a given for most stuffings, but other than that, just about anything goes. Choose a variety of add-ins that seem like they'll taste good together, and consider texture as well as flavor when choosing—you want your stuffing to have some crunchy elements to counter the soft texture of the bread.

Add-in choices

Choose up to 6; 4 to 6 cups total

Cooked— chop or slice

(amounts given are for the starting volume, not the cooked volume)

Celery — 1 to 2 cups

Onions — 2 to 3 cups

Leeks — 1 to 2 cups

Shallots — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Garlic — 2 to 4 large cloves

Bell pepper — $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup

Fresh mushrooms — 1 to 2 cups

Carrots — 1 to 2 cups

Fennel — 1 to 2 cups

Apple — 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups

**Sausage (casings removed) —
up to 1 pound**

Bacon — up to 1 pound

With the exception of sausage and bacon, which should be fully cooked, the add-ins in this list should be cooked together in 2 tablespoons butter or oil with a big pinch of salt in a large covered skillet over medium-low to low heat, stirring occasionally, until they're slightly softened but still have some crunch.

Raw— coarsely chop if large

Dried fruit (cranberries, raisins, tart cherries, currants, apples, pears) — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Nuts (lightly toasted pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts, pecans, or hazelnuts; or roasted chestnuts, for instructions, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 84) — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Fresh shucked oysters (drain before chopping) — 1 to 2 cups

Oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Pitted olives — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Canned water chestnuts (drained) — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Dried mushrooms (rehydrate in hot water before chopping; reserve water) — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup



3 Mix and season the stuffing

All stuffings benefit from a healthy dose of fresh herbs. Sage is a natural for most stuffings, but at the very least, use some parsley.

In a large bowl, toss the bread with the add-ins and seasonings of your choice. Fresh herbs and scallions or chives should be chopped or sliced first and spices should be toasted (see p. 87). Add salt and pepper to taste.

Seasoning choices

Choose up to 5, plus salt & pepper

Fresh flat-leaf parsley — up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Fresh sage — up to 3 tablespoons

Fresh thyme — up to 2 tablespoons

Fresh rosemary — up to 1 tablespoon

Fresh oregano — up to 1 tablespoon

Scallions or chives — up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Chili powder — up to 1 teaspoon

Cumin seeds — up to 2 teaspoons

Caraway seeds — up to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon

Fennel seeds (lightly chopped) — up to 2 teaspoons

Orange or lemon zest (finely grated) — up to 1 teaspoon

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



4 Moisten the stuffing

For most breads, 2 cups liquid is enough, but for very dense breads, like cornbread, you may need more. Start with 2 cups, and if the liquid isn't immediately absorbed and pools at the bottom of the bowl, that should be enough; just toss the mixture occasionally for a few minutes and the liquid will be absorbed. At first, the bread cubes may feel wet on the outside and still be dry on the inside, but they'll even out as the stuffing cooks.

If the bread immediately sucks up the initial 2 cups liquid, add another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and taste the mixture. The bread should be moist but not soggy. Add up to another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup liquid if necessary.

Liquid choices

Choose up to 3; 2 to 3 cups total

Low-salt turkey or chicken broth (homemade or canned) — 1 to 3 cups

Soaking liquid from dried mushrooms (strained) — $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup

Dry white wine — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup



5 Taste and enrich

Taste the mixture and add salt and pepper as needed. If the mixture doesn't taste as rich as you'd like, add enough melted butter or olive oil to suit your taste. If you're using sausage or bacon as an add-in, you may not need any additional fat.

Once you're satisfied with the flavor of the mixture, stir in the beaten eggs.

Optional enrichments

If using, choose 1 or 2; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup total

Melted unsalted butter

Extra-virgin olive oil

Essential enrichment

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

Jennifer Armentrout is
Fine Cooking's test
kitchen manager. ♦



6 Bake the stuffing

375°F, 50 to 60 minutes total

Heat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with oil or cooking spray. Spread the stuffing in the dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake until heated through, about 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue to bake until the top is lightly browned and crisp, another 20 to 30 minutes.

flavor tip:

If you use a Pyrex dish, as opposed to a ceramic one, the bottom of the stuffing will brown better.

Some favorite combos

Fennel & Pine Nut Stuffing

Tuscan or other crusty Italian bread, celery, onion, garlic, fennel, toasted pine nuts, parsley, thyme, fennel seed, orange zest, broth, white wine, olive oil, eggs.

Cranberry & Pecan Sourdough Stuffing

Sourdough bread, celery, onion, dried cranberries, toasted pecans, parsley, sage, thyme, broth, butter, eggs.

Apple, Bacon, Leek & Mushroom Stuffing

French bread, celery, leek, apple, bacon, mild dried mushrooms (oyster mushrooms), parsley, sage, thyme, broth, mushroom-soaking liquid, eggs.

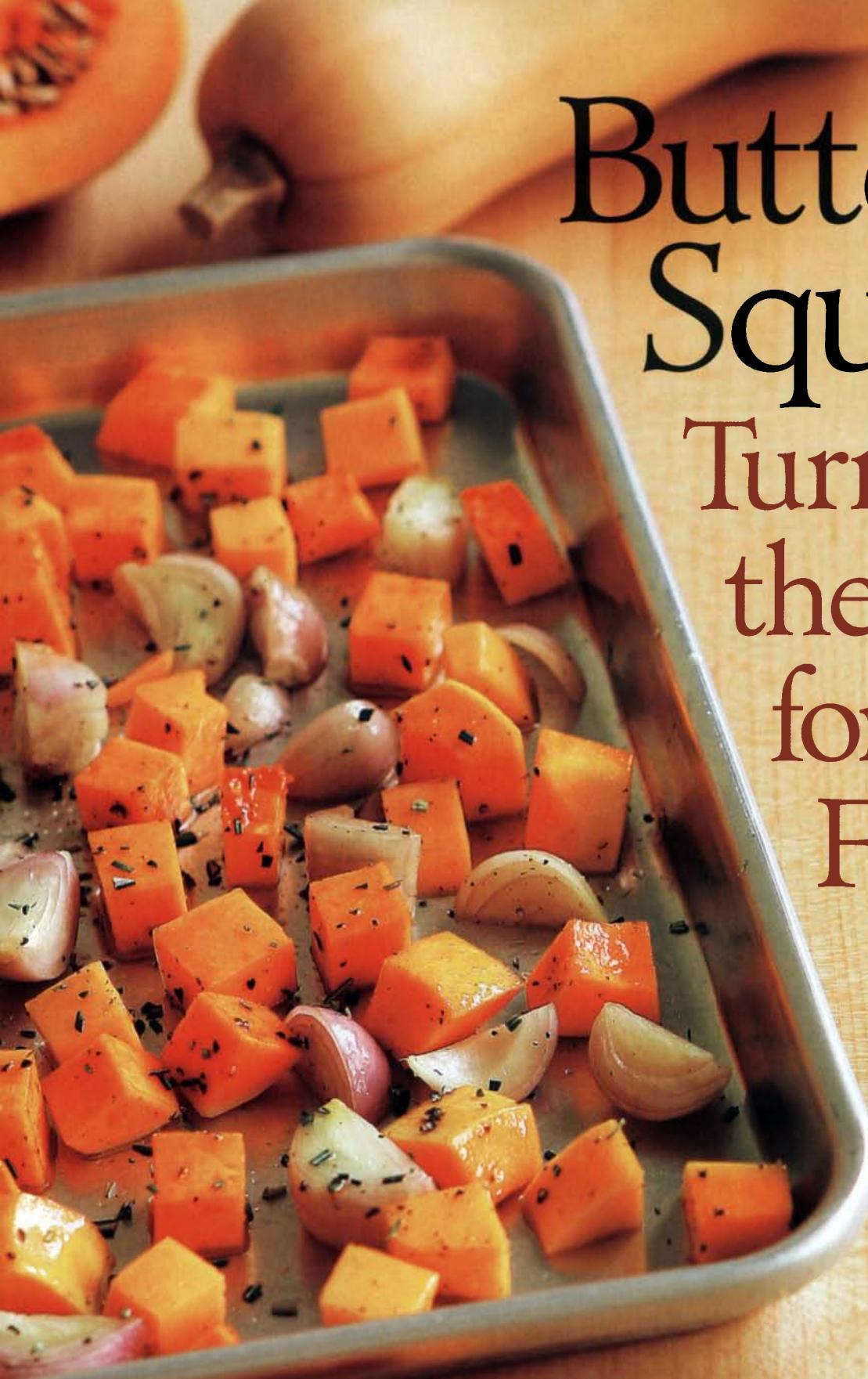
Southwestern-Style Cornbread & Sausage Stuffing

Cornbread, celery, onion, garlic, red bell pepper, sweet

Italian sausage, parsley, oregano, scallion, chili powder, cumin seed, broth, eggs.

Carrot, Mushroom, Water Chestnut & Rye Stuffing

Seedless rye bread (seeded ryes have too much caraway), leeks or onions, garlic, fresh mushrooms, carrots, water chestnuts, parsley, thyme, caraway seed, broth, butter, eggs.

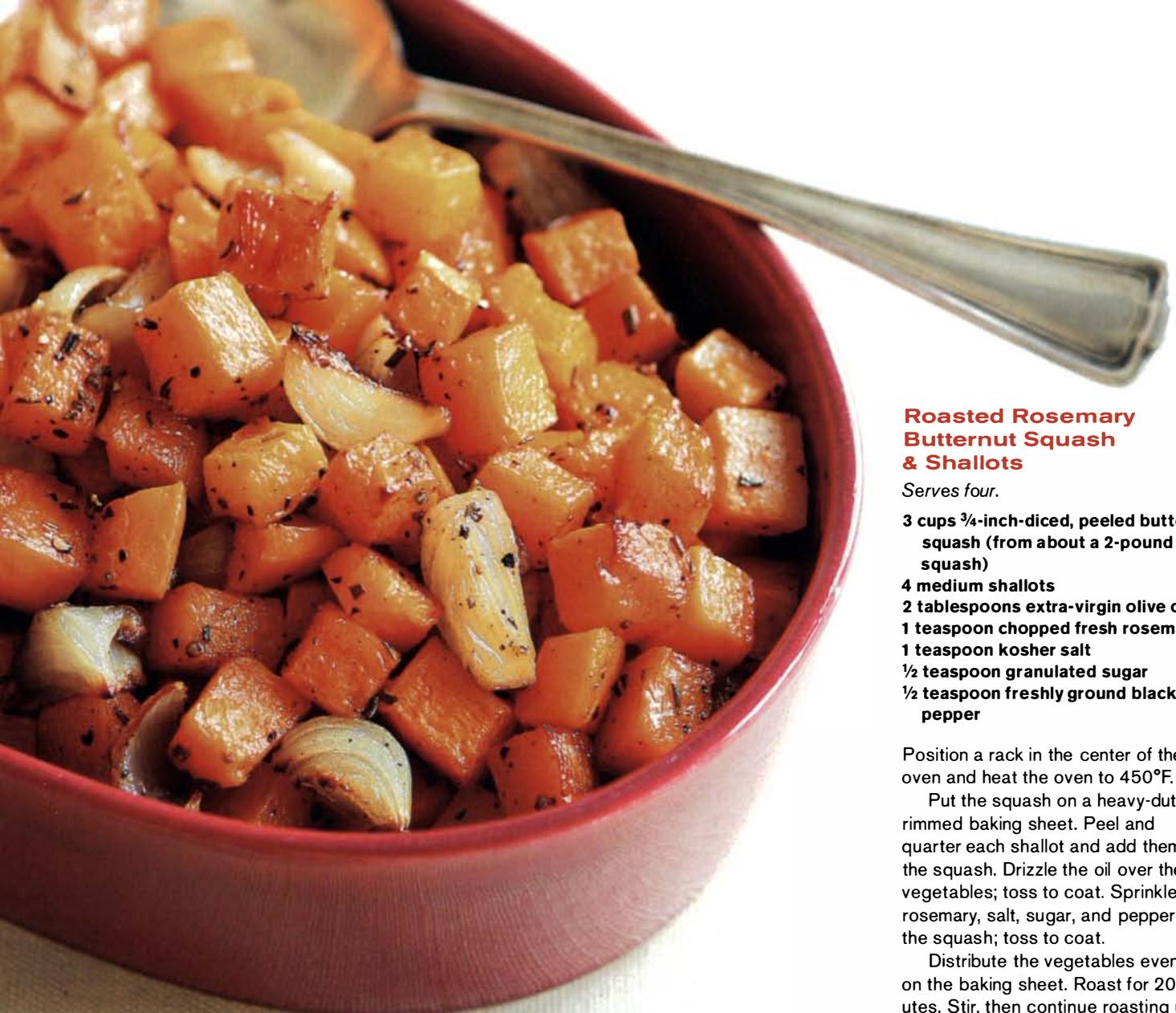


Butternut Squash— Turn Up the Heat for More Flavor

BY JULIANNA GRIMES BOTTCHER

The first step to perfectly roasted vegetables is to spread them out in one layer on a heavy-duty baking sheet—any closer and they'll steam rather than roast.

Each year, when the first crisp days of fall arrive, I turn to butternut squash as my "go-to" vegetable of the season. That's because when it's cooked properly, it can be so many things at once—golden, sweet, nutty, and buttery. But I've found that you need to coax these flavors from butternut; otherwise, this squash can end up tasting bland and boring (this is what my husband thought until I converted him into a fan). The trick is to choose the right cooking method. I don't boil or steam butternut, because neither of these methods will intensify its flavor. Instead, I usually roast or sauté the squash; the high, dry heat of the oven and skillet gives



Roasted Rosemary Butternut Squash & Shallots

Serves four.

3 cups $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-diced, peeled butternut squash (from about a 2-pound squash)
4 medium shallots
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

Put the squash on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. Peel and quarter each shallot and add them to the squash. Drizzle the oil over the vegetables; toss to coat. Sprinkle the rosemary, salt, sugar, and pepper over the squash; toss to coat.

Distribute the vegetables evenly on the baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes. Stir, then continue roasting until the vegetables are tender and lightly browned, 10 to 15 minutes more. Before serving, taste and season with more salt if needed.

it a golden, crisp exterior and deep, rich flavor.

Butternut squash also pairs well with a variety of flavors. It can go sweet or spicy, and it likes both nuts and herbs. The side dish recipes here—two that use the roasting method and two stovetop sautés—offer some ideas for great flavor pairings for butternut. But before you start cooking, here are a few tips for getting the best browning.

First, peel and cut the butternut into small, uniform cubes. For all of the recipes that follow, I cut the butternut into $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes, which is just the right size to let it develop a bit of color in the time it takes to get ten-

der. For more on how to peel and cube butternut, see the sidebar on p. 58.

The recipes here call for specific amounts of cubed squash, so you may have some left over. You might want to sauté the extra cubes and use them in a salad or a frittata.

Choose the right equipment. When sautéing the squash, don't use a non-stick pan, because it will prevent the butternut from browning quickly. Instead, opt for a straight-sided sauté pan with a stainless interior. For roasting, I've found that a good-quality rimmed metal baking sheet (instead of a deeper Pyrex or metal baking dish) gives the best results: golden-roasted cubes of rich butternut.

Choosing the right method—roasting or sautéing—is the key to terrific butternut side dishes.



Roasted Butternut Squash & Pear Salad with Spiced Pecan Vinaigrette

Serves six.

- ½ cup pecans, very coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- ½ teaspoon ancho chile powder
- 3 cups ¾-inch-diced, peeled butternut squash (from about a 2-pound squash)
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced shallots
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons light brown sugar
- 6 cups loosely packed mixed salad greens
- 1 small ripe pear, halved, cored, and thinly sliced

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

Put the pecans and butter in an 8-inch-square Pyrex dish and toss to coat. Sprinkle with the chile powder and toss. Bake the nuts until toasted, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Put the squash on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of the oil over the squash and sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon salt. Toss to coat. Roast the squash until browned on the bottom, about 20 minutes. Flip with a metal spatula and continue to roast until the squash is tender and nicely browned on a second side, 5 to 10 minutes more. Set aside to cool.

Put the shallots in a small bowl, cover with hot water, and let soak for 15 minutes; drain in a colander.

Combine the vinegar, mustard, brown sugar, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. While whisking vigorously, slowly pour in the remaining ⅓ cup oil.

Combine the salad greens and shallots in a large bowl; sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt. Drizzle just enough of the dressing over the salad to coat lightly, and toss gently. Divide the greens among six plates and scatter the pecans, squash, and pears over the greens. Drizzle with a little more dressing if desired and serve.

Peel it and cube it

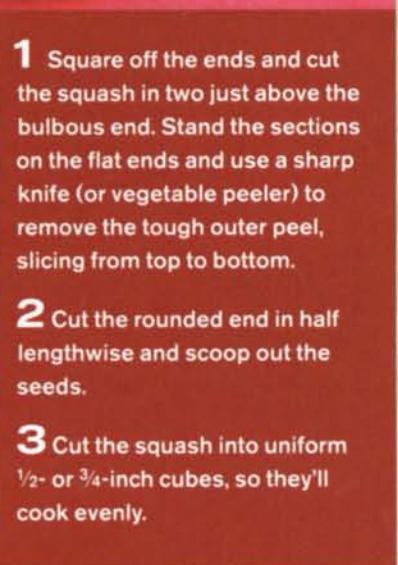
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2



3



1 Square off the ends and cut the squash in two just above the bulbous end. Stand the sections on the flat ends and use a sharp knife (or vegetable peeler) to remove the tough outer peel, slicing from top to bottom.

2 Cut the rounded end in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds.

3 Cut the squash into uniform ½- or ¾-inch cubes, so they'll cook evenly.



Butternut squash
pairs well with
many flavors.
Try nuts, herbs,
spices, or
citrus zest.

Sautéed Butternut Squash with Lemon, Walnuts & Parsley

Serves two to three.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 cups $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diced, peeled butternut squash (from about a 2-pound squash)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped walnuts (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces), toasted
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons freshly grated lemon zest

Heat the oil and butter in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot and the butter has melted, add the squash, 1 teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the squash is lightly browned and tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the squash to a serving bowl. Add the parsley, walnuts, and lemon zest, and toss to combine. Serve immediately.

Sautéed Butternut Squash with Garlic, Ginger & Spices

Serves three to four.

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 cups $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diced, peeled butternut squash (from about a 2-pound squash)
- Kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger (use a rasp-style grater if you have one)
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground coriander
- Pinch ground cinnamon
- Pinch cayenne
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

Melt 3 tablespoons of the butter in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the butternut squash and a large pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally at first and then more frequently as the squash browns, until the squash is tender and lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Push the squash to one side of the pan and add the remaining tablespoon of butter to the clear space. When the butter melts, add the ginger, garlic, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Cook the aromatics in the melted butter, stirring constantly and scraping the bottom of the pan until they are softened, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir the cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and cayenne into the ginger and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir the flavorings into the squash, adjust the salt to taste before serving, and garnish with the cilantro, if using.

Julianne Grimes Bottcher is a food writer and recipe developer based in Birmingham, Alabama. ♦

Rediscovering The Russet



More than just a baking potato, russets are perfect for gratins and mashes

BY MOLLY STEVENS

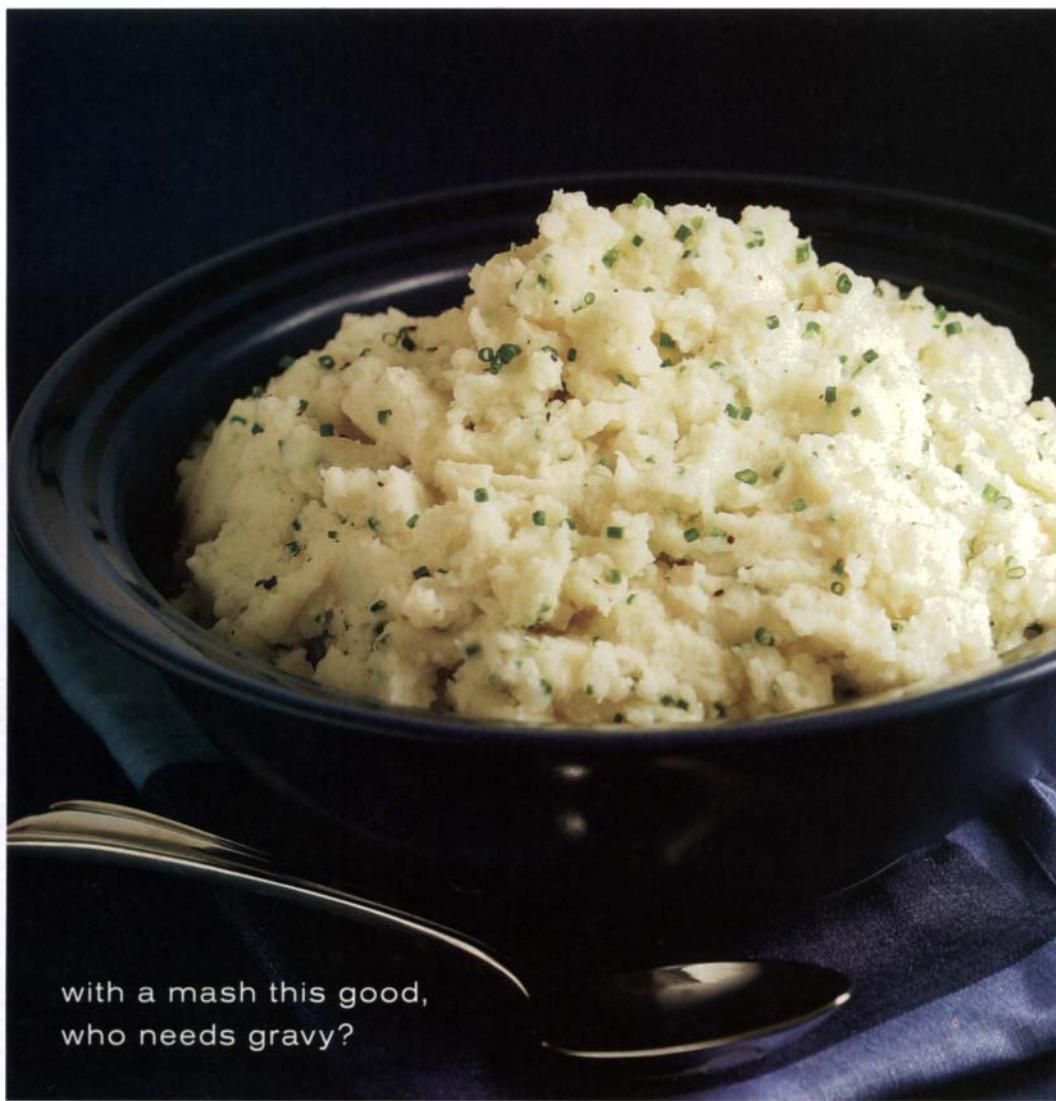
If I were asked to name the food that best symbolizes American cuisine, I'd have to say potatoes. After all, each one of us eats an average of 135 pounds of spuds a year. If I were asked to be more specific, I'd say russets, which are by far the most popular potato in the United States. In fact, about three-quarters of the potatoes we eat are russets.

Russets are long, large, and easily recognized by their thick, rough, cork-like skin. Inside, the flesh is snowy white and very dry, almost floury. In fact, when identifying potatoes according to their starch content, russets are the standard for high-starch potatoes (often referred to as mealy potatoes), while other varieties, such as Red Bliss, are classified as low-starch, or waxy. (See the sidebar on p. 63 for more on potato starches). This high starch content means low moisture and sugar levels, and this is what counts most in the kitchen. Imagine, for a moment, the perfect baked potato—always a russet. The outside jacket is dry and a little crisp. You slice it open and squeeze gently to expose the flesh inside, and there you have it, the

A russet by any other name

Though they're best known as russet potatoes, these popular spuds are sometimes referred to as Idaho potatoes or baking potatoes. Other Russet varieties can be found at specialty and farmers' markets. Look for Gold Nugget, Lemhi Russet, Russet Arcadia, Norgold, Russet Nooksack, Norkotah, and Butte. While they'll all have the russet's characteristic dry, fluffy texture, you can expect subtle distinctions in flavor and texture.

Most russets are harvested in the fall, then stored and sold throughout the year. A potato's starch content is highest when first harvested. Over time, some of the starches convert to sugars, so you may find that russets bought in spring and summer aren't quite as absorbent as they are in fall and winter.



with a mash this good,
who needs gravy?

essence of the russet—dry, fluffy, light, exceedingly thirsty and ready to drink up the butter, sour cream, crème fraîche, or whatever you choose to top it with. If you were to bake a low-starch potato, like a Red Bliss, the inside would be moist, dense, almost creamy, and certainly not dry enough to soak up much butter or sour cream.

Russets' high-starch, low-moisture content makes them great in many dishes. They make first-rate mashed potatoes—soft and light and able to absorb an impressive amount of liquid or other enrichments. When sliced thinly, layered in a baking dish, and covered with milk and cream, russets bake up into a tender, toothsome gratin. The potatoes absorb flavor along

with the liquid, so I like to infuse the cream with aromatics (like bay leaf and garlic). And finally, russets make the best french fries. Again, it's their low moisture content. As the potato fries, what little moisture it contains gets pushed out, leaving the fry crispy outside and dry inside.

But when shouldn't you use russets? They fall apart easily when boiled and can become waterlogged, so avoid using them for simple boiled potatoes or for potato salads. Also, they'll absorb too much dressing if used in a salad. And though russets make delicious smooth soups (see the recipe on the back cover), it's not a good idea to use them in any soup where you want the potatoes to stay in small, intact chunks.

Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes with Chives

Serves six; yields 5½ cups.

If you need to keep the potatoes warm before serving, create a makeshift double-boiler: Transfer the potatoes to a large stainless-steel bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and place the bowl over a pan of simmering water. The potatoes can be held for about an hour this way—just be sure that the bottom of the bowl sits above the surface of the water and that the water doesn't simmer away.

3 pounds russet potatoes (4 to 6 medium), peeled and cut into 1½- to 2-inch chunks

Kosher salt

6 to 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into 4 pieces

1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature

¼ cup thinly sliced chives (1 small bunch)

Freshly ground black pepper

Put the potatoes in a large saucepan and cover by an inch with cold water. Add 1½ teaspoons kosher salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, partially cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender and easily pierced with a skewer, about 20 minutes. Drain, and return the potatoes to the saucepan. Put the pan over low heat, and shake or stir the potatoes until a floury film forms on the bottom of the pot, 1 to 2 minutes.

Using a ricer, food mill, or potato masher, mash the potatoes. Stir in the butter, 1 piece at a time, with a broad wooden spoon. Once the butter is thoroughly absorbed, add the buttermilk in three parts, stirring vigorously between additions. Add the chives, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot.

Tips for better mashed potatoes

Start the potatoes in cold water

and bring to a simmer, which allows them to cook evenly.

Simmer the potatoes gently.

If they boil too violently, they'll fall apart before they're cooked.

Test for doneness with a metal skewer.

It's more accurate than a knife and less damaging than a fork.

After cooking, drain thoroughly,

shaking to rid potatoes of excess water; return them to the pot over low heat and stir to dry them fully.

The best tool for mashing

is a ricer (for sources, see p. 92), but you can also use a food mill or a simple handheld potato masher.

Never use a food processor to mash russets;

you'll overwork them and give them a gluey texture.

Store potatoes properly

Refrigerating russets turns their starches to sugars.

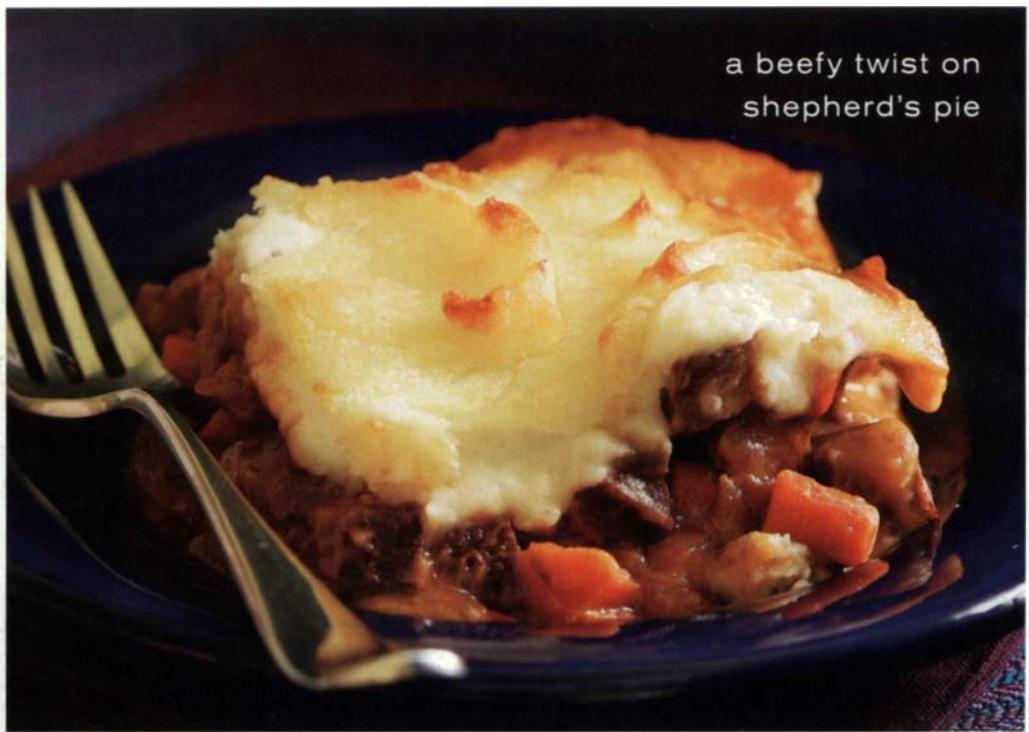
Instead, store them in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place—in a paper bag in a low cupboard, for instance.

Don't wash russets before storing.

Dampness can cause decay. Remove any rotten spots, as they'll cause the other potatoes to spoil.

Avoid storing russets near onions,

which will cause both to spoil sooner.



a beefy twist on shepherd's pie

Cottage Pie with Beef & Carrots

Serves six to eight.

Cottage Pie originated as a way to use up leftover beef stew, but why wait for leftovers? Here's how to make the ultimate comfort meal from scratch.

FOR THE BEEF STEW:

- 1¾ cups low-salt beef broth (1 14-ounce can)
- ½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 2 to 3 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 2½ pounds thin-cut chuck steaks, preferably top blade (or flat iron), ½ to ¾ inch thick, trimmed of any excess fat or gristle
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch dice (about 1⅓ cups)
- 2 celery stalks, cut into ½-inch dice (about 1 cup)
- 2 small onions, cut into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 1½ teaspoons fresh thyme leaves (or ½ teaspoon dried)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup dry white wine or dry vermouth

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 2 pounds russet potatoes (3 to 4 medium), peeled and cut into 1½- to 2-inch chunks
- Kosher salt
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter (at room temperature, cut into 3 pieces) plus 2 teaspoons (cold, cut into small bits); more for the baking dish
- ½ cup milk, light cream, or half-and-half, warmed
- Freshly ground black pepper

Make the beef stew: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Pour the broth into a small saucepan and add the mushrooms. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Remove from the heat, cover, and steep for at least 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a heavy stew pot or shallow 5-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Pat the steaks dry, season lightly with kosher salt and pepper, and put only as many in the pan as will fit without crowding. Sear the steaks, flipping once, until nicely browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Set aside on a platter, and repeat with the remaining steaks.

Lower the heat to medium, and if the pan looks dry, add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Add the carrots, celery, onions, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften, about 7 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste, and cook for a few minutes. Add the flour, stirring to blend, and cook for another minute. Add the wine, bring to a simmer, and reduce the heat to low. With a slotted spoon, scoop the mushrooms from the broth and transfer to a cutting board. Coarsely chop the mushrooms and add them to the vegetables. Slowly add the broth, being careful to hold back the last few tablespoons, which may contain grit from the mushrooms.

Cut the steaks into ½- to ¾-inch cubes and add to the pot, along with any juices. Cover tightly and transfer to the oven. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the meat is tender, about 1 hour. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set the stew in a warm place, and increase the oven temperature to 375°F. (Or if making ahead, let cool, then cover and refrigerate.)

Make the topping: About 30 minutes before the stew is ready, put the potatoes in a large

Why russets are dry and fluffy

Not only do russet potatoes have more starch than other varieties, they also have more of a particular type of starch, known as amylose. These starch granules are relatively large, and when they're heated they absorb water from surrounding cells, which makes the potato dry. The amylose starch also swells up and separates, and this makes the potato seem light and fluffy. The result is a potato that's perfect for baking and mashing, not to mention absorbing butter and other enrichments.

saucepan and cover by an inch with cold water. Add 1 teaspoon kosher salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, partially cover, and simmer until the potatoes are easily pierced with a skewer, about 20 minutes. Drain, and return the potatoes to the saucepan. Put the pan over low heat and shake or stir the potatoes until a floury film forms on the bottom of the pot, 1 to 2 minutes.

Using a ricer, food mill, or potato masher, mash the potatoes. Stir in the 5 tablespoons of butter with a broad wooden spoon. Once the butter is thoroughly absorbed, add the milk or cream in three parts, stirring vigorously between additions. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Assemble and bake: Lightly butter a shallow 3-quart baking dish. Spoon the stew into the baking dish. Spread the potatoes on top in an even layer—you don't need to spread them all the way to the edge. Dot the top with the remaining 2 teaspoons butter. Bake at 375°F until the stew is bubbling around the sides, and the top is lightly browned, 35 to 45 minutes (45 to 55 minutes if the pie has been refrigerated).

VARIATION: Cottage Pie with Horseradish Potato Topping: Drain and squeeze the liquid from 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish. Stir the horseradish into the mashed potatoes along with the butter.

MAKE-AHEAD TIPS: The beef stew can be made several days ahead and kept, covered, in the refrigerator; just reheat before proceeding with the recipe. You can also fully assemble the pie 1 day ahead: Dot the top with the 2 teaspoons butter, cool the pie, cover with plastic, and refrigerate until ready to bake.



creamy,
cheesy, and
comforting

Three-Cheese Potato Gratin

Serves six to eight.

If you'd like to make this less rich, use less cream and more milk.

- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- 1½ cups whole milk**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 2 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- 2 to 3 sprigs rosemary, 3 inches long**
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg**
- 4 ounces grated Swiss cheese (about 1 cup)**
- 2 ounces freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about ½ cup)**
- 2 pounds russet potatoes (3 to 4 medium)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper**
- 4 ounces fresh goat cheese, crumbled (about ⅔ cup)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with the butter.

Pour the milk and cream into a small saucepan. Add the garlic, rosemary, and nutmeg. Bring just to a simmer, cover, and remove from the heat. Set aside to infuse for at least 20 minutes. Combine the Swiss cheese and Parmigiano in a bowl.

Peel the potatoes and, using a mandoline or your sharpest knife, slice them into ¼-inch-thick rounds. Arrange about one-third of the potatoes in a single overlapping layer in the baking dish, season with kosher salt and white pepper, and top with one-third of the Swiss-Parmigiano mix. Scatter over half of the goat cheese. Add a second overlapping layer of potatoes, more salt and white pepper, another third of the Swiss-Parmigiano mix, and the remaining goat cheese. Make a third layer with the remaining potatoes and season with salt and white pepper. Press down lightly to compact the layers.

Remove the garlic and rosemary from the infused cream, and discard them. Set the cream over medium-high heat and watch carefully until it just begins to simmer; don't let it boil. Pour the cream over the potatoes and sprinkle the remaining cheese on top.

Set the baking dish on the foil-lined baking sheet, and bake until the top is deeply brown and the potatoes are completely tender when poked with a skewer, 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours. Let sit for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

Russets also make terrific soups; see the recipe on the back cover.



Perfecting Apple Pie

BY CAROLE WALTER

Learn to make a classic apple pie with a wonderfully flaky crust

It's not Thanksgiving without apple pie, and this classic version is my absolute favorite. The filling is lovely: a blend of sweet Cortlands and tangy Granny Smiths, laced with just enough sugar and spice to make the apples' flavors sing. But as you'll discover when you try the recipe, it's the crust that makes this pie so special. Delicate, light, and exceptionally flaky, it's everything a pie crust should be.

I truly believe that the most delicious pies are the ones you make yourself, so it's unfortunate that making pie from scratch tends to inspire so much fear. Throughout my years of teaching baking classes, I've watched countless students—many of them excellent, self-assured cooks—grip their rolling pins so tightly that their knuckles turn white when it's time to roll out the dough. So my first word of advice is simply this: Relax. With a bit of practice and the step-by-step recipe on the facing page, you'll soon be mixing and rolling out dough with confidence. The pie recipe may look time-consuming, but it really isn't. It's long because I've covered all the little details, so you won't be left guessing what to do.

Flaky Pie Pastry

Yields enough dough for one 9-inch double-crust pie.

This recipe calls for a food processor to cut in the fat. If you're mixing the dough by hand, follow the instructions in the box below, noting the slight increase in flour needed.

10½ ounces (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
¾ teaspoon table salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
4 ounces (½ cup) chilled, unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes
4 ounces (½ cup) chilled vegetable shortening, cut into ½-inch pieces
5 to 6 tablespoons ice water; more as needed

Put the flour, sugar, table salt, and baking powder in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Chill for 20 to 30 minutes.

Pulse the dry ingredients together for a few seconds to blend. With the processor off, add half of the butter and half of the vegetable shortening. Pulse 5 times, then process for 5 seconds. Add the remaining butter and shortening and pulse again 5 times, then process for 5 seconds. You should have a mixture of both large and small crumbs 1. Empty the mixture into a large mixing bowl.

Drizzle 1 tablespoon of the ice water around the edge of the bowl, letting it trickle into the crumbs 2. Flick the moistened crumbs towards the center with a table fork, rotating the bowl as you work 3. Repeat with 4 more tablespoons ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time. As you add the water, the crumbs should begin to form larger clusters. Once you've added 5 tablespoons water total, take a handful of crumbs and squeeze them gently—they should hold together 4. If they easily break apart, the mixture needs more water—add the remaining tablespoon, one teaspoon at a time, checking the consistency after each addition. If the crumbs still fail to hold together, you can add additional water, but do so sparingly.

Gather a handful of the crumbly dough and press it against the side of the bowl to form a small mass, flouring your hand as needed to

prevent excessive sticking. Increase the size of this mass by pressing it into more of the crumbly mixture until you've used up about half of the total mixture in the bowl. Make a second mass of dough with the remaining crumbs. If some of the crumbs on the bottom of the bowl need more moistening, add a few drops of water.

Form the two masses of dough into balls, dust them with flour, and flatten them into 4- to 5-inch disks. Pat the disks to release any excess flour. Score the tops lightly with the side of your hand to create a tic-tac-toe pattern. With cupped hands, rotate each disk on the work surface to smooth the edges of the disks. Wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill at least 30 minutes before using.

Make ahead: You can make the dough ahead and refrigerate it for up to 3 days or freeze it for up to 4 months (thaw it overnight in the fridge before using). Before rolling, let the dough sit at room temperature until pliable.

Don't have a food processor?

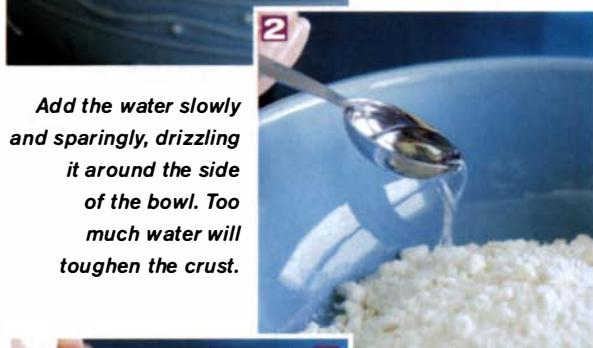
You can make this dough without a food processor, but you must use a bit more flour—11 ¼ ounces total—and sift it first; you should have 2½ cups after sifting. Also the butter shouldn't be rock hard, so take it out of the fridge for a few minutes before you start. Your finger should leave a slight imprint when you press the butter.

To cut in the fats by hand, whisk the dry ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Add the cubed butter and vegetable shortening and mix briefly with a fork to coat the fats with flour. Cut the fats into the dry ingredients with a pastry blender or two dinner knives, working the mixture until the particles have a coarse, mealy texture similar to that of fresh bread crumbs with some larger pea-size pieces. From there, continue with the recipe above to add the water and finish the dough.

4 steps to flaky dough



1 You want a mixture of both large and small crumbs. The large pieces give you a flaky pastry; the small pieces make it tender.



2 Add the water slowly and sparingly, drizzling it around the side of the bowl. Too much water will toughen the crust.

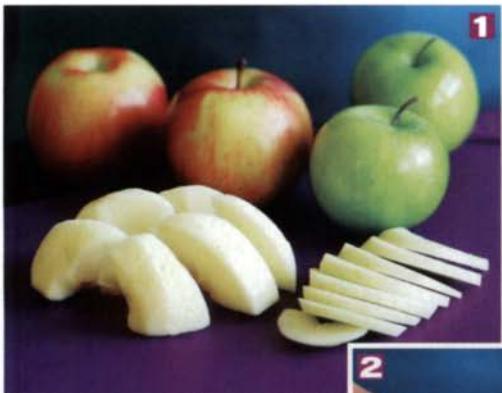


3 Use a fork to "fluff" the crumbs with the liquid. Don't stir or mash the crumbs because this compacts the mixture and results in a tough dough.



4 Test whether you've added enough water by gently squeezing a handful of crumbs; if they don't hold together, the mixture needs more water.

Tips for assembling the pie



1 *Cortland and Granny Smith apples have different textures. To help them cook evenly and retain their shape, cut the Cortlands into 3/4-inch-thick chunks and the Granny Smiths into 1/4-inch-thick slices.*

Use a pastry cloth and pin stocking (for sources, see p. 92) to roll the dough into a circle. Roll from the center out and avoid rolling the pin off the edge of the dough until the final stages of shaping.



2



Use the pin to move the dough. Allow for about a 1-inch overhang when you unroll the dough on top of the apples.

Make aluminum-foil bands to prevent the edge from burning. Cut two 2- to 3-inch-wide strips of 18-inch heavy-duty foil and carefully cover the edge of the pie with the strips. Fasten the strips together with masking tape to keep them from falling off the pie.



3

Classic Apple Pie

Yields one 9-inch double-crust pie; serves eight to ten.

For best results, bake this pie at least a few hours before you plan to cut into it; otherwise, the filling may be soupy. With time, the fruit reabsorbs the juices, and the pie will cut like a charm.

1 1/2 to 1 3/4 pounds Cortland apples (about 4 medium)
1 pound Granny Smith apples (about 2 1/2 medium)
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon; more to taste
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 large egg white
2 teaspoons unsalted butter, softened, plus 1 tablespoon cold unsalted butter cut into small (1/4-inch) cubes
4 to 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 recipe Flaky Pie Pastry (p. 65)

Position two oven racks in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F.

Be a pro at rolling dough

Cool pie dough rolls best.

Dough that's too cold will crack when it's rolled; if too warm, it will stick to the rolling surface. Test your dough's firmness by pressing the disk with your fingers; they should leave a slight imprint.

Roll from the center out.

Set the pin in the middle of the dough and roll away from you; return to the center and roll toward you. Rolling back and forth repeatedly will toughen the dough. For the same reason, don't flip the dough over.

Give the dough a quarter turn frequently, to help ensure even thickness.

To prevent sticking, lightly reflour the rolling surface and pin, if necessary, but don't sprinkle flour on the dough, or you risk toughening it.

Ease up on the rolling pin as you approach the edge of the dough; otherwise, the edges will get too thin.

Roll pastry into a circle at least 4 inches larger than the diameter of the pie plate.

Make the filling:

Peel the apples, cut each in half from top to bottom, remove the cores with a melon baller, and trim the ends with a paring knife. Lay the apples, cut side down, on a cutting board. Cut the Cortland apples crosswise into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces, and then halve each piece diagonally **1**. Cut the Granny Smith apples crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices, leaving them whole. Put the apples in a large bowl and toss with the lemon juice.

Combine the brown sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the granulated sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, kosher salt, and nutmeg in a small bowl. (Don't add this to the fruit yet.)

In a small dish, lightly beat the egg white with 1 teaspoon water. Set aside.

Try a pear and cranberry variation:



Autumn Fruit Pie

1 pound Anjou pears (about 3 small or 2 large), peeled, halved, cored, ends trimmed, and cut lengthwise into 1-inch slices.

**1 cup fresh cranberries, rinsed and dried
1 teaspoon ground ginger**

Proceed with the Classic Apple Pie recipe, omitting the Granny Smith apples and mixing the pears and cranberries with the Cortland apples. Omit the cinnamon and nutmeg, and add the ground ginger to the sugar mixture.

Assemble the pie:

Butter a 9-inch ovenproof glass (Pyrex) pie plate, including the rim, with the 2 teaspoons of softened butter.

Rub 2 to 3 tablespoons of flour into the surface of a pastry cloth, forming a circle about 15 inches across, and also into a rolling pin stocking (for sources and more information on using a pastry cloth, see p. 92 and p. 34). If you don't have a pastry cloth, rub the flour into a large, smooth-weave, cotton kitchen towel and use a floured rolling pin. Roll one of the disks of dough into a circle that's $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick and about 15 inches across **2**.

Lay the rolling pin across the upper third of the dough circle; lift the pastry cloth to gently drape the dough over the pin and then roll the pin toward you, wrapping the remaining dough loosely around it. Hold the rolling pin over the near edge of the pie plate. Allowing for about a 1-inch overhang, unroll the dough away from you, easing it into the contours of the pan. If the dough isn't centered in the pan, gently adjust it and then lightly press it into the pan. Take care not to stretch the dough. If it tears, simply press it back together—the dough is quite forgiving.

Brush the bottom and sides of the dough with a light coating of the egg-white wash (you won't need all of it). Leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch overhang, cut around the edge of the dough with kitchen shears.

Combine the sugar mixture with the apples and toss to coat well. Mound the apples in the pie plate, rearranging the fruit as needed to make the pile compact. Dot the apples with the 1 tablespoon cold butter cubes.

Rub another 2 to 3 tablespoons flour into the surface of the pastry cloth and stocking. Roll the remaining dough into a circle that's $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick and about 15 inches across. Use the rolling pin to move the dough **3**. As you unroll the dough, center it on top of the apples. Place your hands on either side of the top crust of the pie and ease the dough toward the center, giving the dough plenty of slack. Leaving a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch overhang, trim the top layer of dough around the rim of the pie plate. Fold the top layer of dough under the bottom layer, tucking the two layers of dough together. Press a lightly floured fork around the edge of the dough to seal it, or flute the edge of the dough with lightly floured fingers.

Lightly brush the top with cold water and sprinkle the surface with the remaining 1 tablespoon sugar. Make steam vents in the dough by poking the tip of a paring knife through it in a few places; it's important to vent well so that the steam from the cooking apples won't build up and crack the top of the crust.

Bake the pie:

Cover the rim of the pie with aluminum foil bands **4**. This will prevent the edge of the crust from overbrowning.

Place a rimmed baking sheet or an aluminum foil drip pan on the oven rack below the pie to catch any juices that overflow during baking. Set the pie on the rack above.

Bake until the top and bottom crusts are golden brown and the juices are bubbling, 60 to 75 minutes; to thicken, the juices must boil, so look for the bubbles through the steam vents or through cracks near the edges of the pie and listen for the sound of bubbling juices. During the last 5 minutes of baking, remove the foil bands from the edges of the pie. Cool the pie at least 3 hours and up to overnight before serving.

Store the pie at room temperature for up to 1 day. For longer storage, cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for up to 5 days; reheat before serving in a 325°F oven until warmed through, about 20 minutes.

Carole Walter is a baking instructor and the author of several cookbooks. Her new book on coffee cakes will be released next fall. ♦

reader review

A *Fine Cooking* reader gave these recipes a real-world test. Here are the results:

The recipe's instructions on chilling the dough, not combining the apple filling right away, and rolling the dough out on a kitchen towel were very helpful in making a superior final dish. This pie was absolutely worth the effort—it tasted as good as any of the homemade pies we've tasted from our local farmers' markets and country stores.

—Deborah Schapiro,
Burlington, Vermont

Make Chicken Tikka



A favorite at Indian restaurants, chicken tikka masala has a creamy, aromatic tomato sauce that's a natural with jasmine rice.



Masala at Home

With a step-by-step technique and a few common spices, you can make an Indian dish that everyone will love

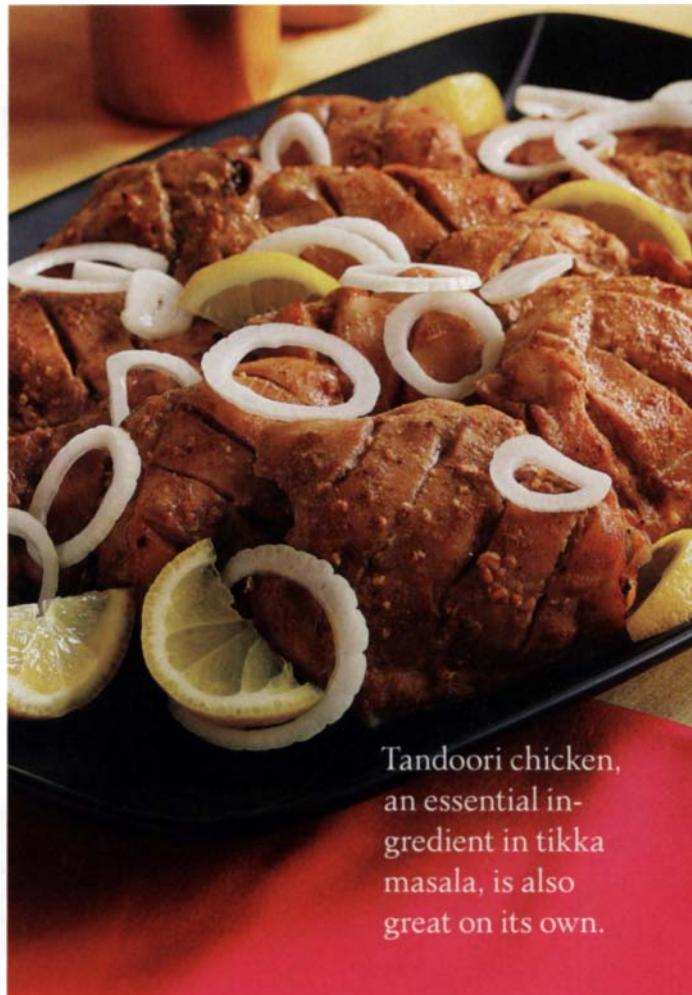
BY SUNEETA VASWANI

If you're an Indian food lover, you may be familiar with chicken tikka masala, which appears on most Indian restaurant menus. This popular chicken dish with its creamy, aromatic tomato sauce originated in Delhi, India, in the middle of the last century. As the story goes, one evening, a tiny eatery that served Indian-style barbecued food (or tandoori) had some cream, butter, and tandoori chicken left over in the kitchen. Since there was no refrigeration at the eatery, the owner came up with a new dish to make use of those perishable leftovers. The rest is history. In India, the dish is known as chicken makhanwala ("makhan" in Hindi means butter), but in Britain, this dish was renamed chicken tikka masala ("tikka" means "boneless," and "masala" means "spices").

Start by making a batch of good tandoori chicken (see the recipe on p. 71). This chicken is marinated in yogurt, lemon juice, and spices, and then it's traditionally cooked in a special clay oven called a "tandoor," but I've found that roasting the chicken in a regular oven produces excellent results as well.

I roast chicken thighs on the bone, which keeps the meat moist and gives it better flavor. When it's cool, I pull off the meat in pieces—I never shred the meat, which can make it dry out.

Butter, cream, tomatoes, and spices transform tandoori chicken into chicken tikka masala. First you sauté the roasted chicken pieces in butter, infusing them with flavor and slightly crisping the edges of the meat. Next, you create a rich, spiced tomato sauce in which you simmer the chicken so it can absorb more flavor. In this sauce, a few important spices come into play, and they should be as fresh as possible. If your paprika has been around longer than a year, it's probably time to get a new jar. Garam masala is a mixture of several spices; it's available in many supermarkets. For the cumin seeds, toasting and grinding takes only a few extra minutes and makes the difference between a good tikka masala and a phenomenal one.

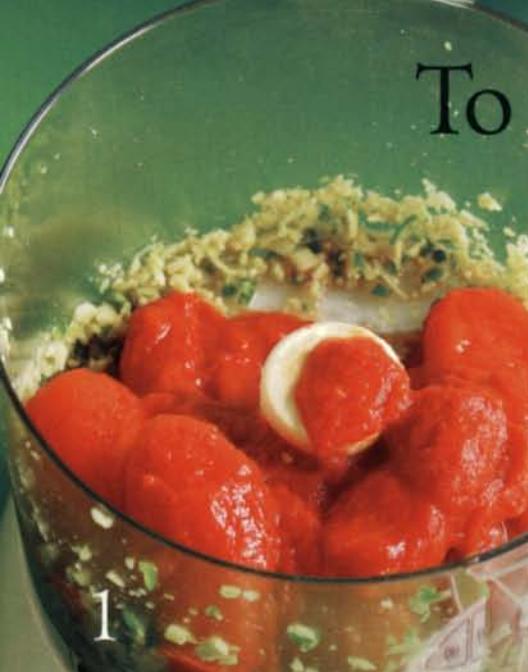


Tandoori chicken, an essential ingredient in tikka masala, is also great on its own.

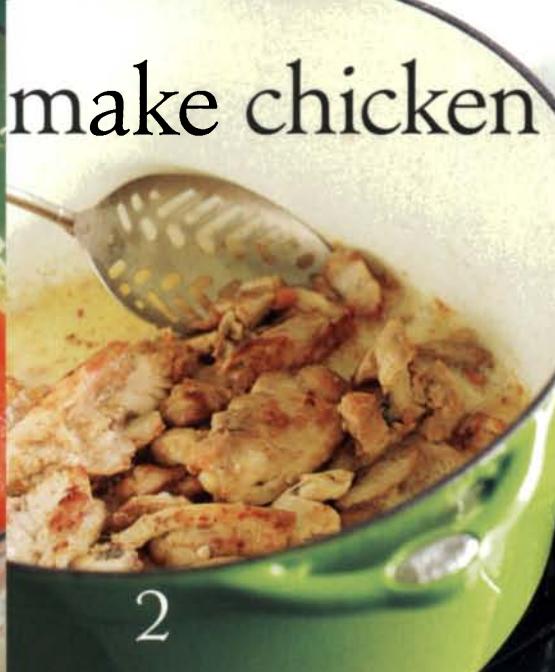
Better on the second day

Chicken tikka masala tastes even better made ahead. You can store it in the refrigerator for up to four days; it also freezes well. Thaw completely before reheating on low heat and add a little additional garam masala and cumin before serving, if you like.

To make chicken tikka masala,



1



2



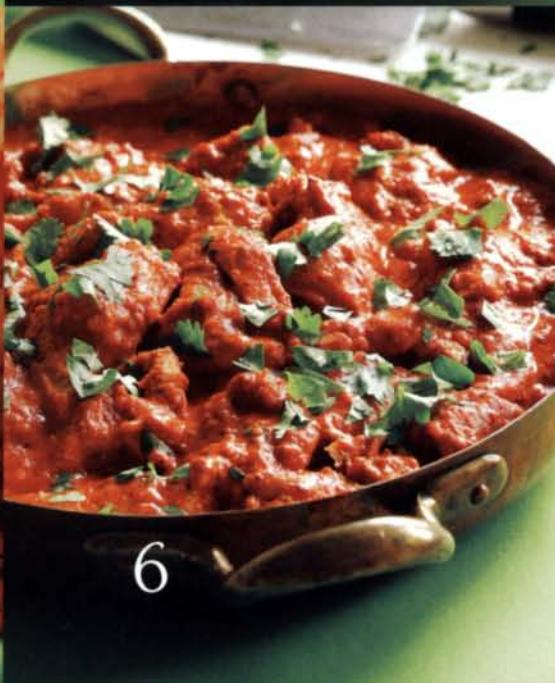
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5



6

Chicken Tikka Masala

Serves six to eight.

- 1 2-inch-long hot green chile (preferably serrano), stemmed but not seeded, chopped
- 1 1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 1 28-ounce can whole tomatoes
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 recipe Roasted Tandoori Chicken (recipe at right), meat removed from bones in large pieces; try not to shred (about 5 cups)
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 2 tablespoons cumin seeds, toasted (see p. 87) and ground in a spice grinder
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons garam masala
- ¾ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

1 In a food processor, pulse the chile and ginger until very finely chopped. Add the canned tomatoes with their juice and process until the mixture is puréed. Set aside.

2 Melt 6 tablespoons of the butter in a 6- to 8-quart Dutch oven over medium heat. When the foam subsides, add about a third of the chicken pieces and cook, stirring frequently, until the chicken absorbs some of the butter and begins to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to a plate. Repeat with the remaining two batches of chicken.

3 Add the remaining 2 tablespoons butter to the pan. When it's melted, add the paprika and 4 teaspoons of the cumin and stir until the spices just begin to darken, 10 to 15 seconds.

4 Immediately add the tomato mixture. Simmer vigorously, uncovered, stirring frequently, until the sauce has thickened slightly, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the cream and 1 teaspoon kosher salt and stir well.

5 Add the chicken and stir gently to mix. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Stir in the garam masala and remaining cumin. Remove from the heat, cover, and allow to rest for 15 minutes. Taste and add more salt if necessary.

6 Transfer to a serving bowl, garnish with cilantro, and serve.

start by roasting tandoori chicken.



Roasted Tandoori Chicken

Serves six.

Restaurants use food coloring to give this chicken its traditional red color, but this ingredient is optional. The roasting method works best if you're making the Chicken Tikka Masala recipe at left; if you want to serve tandoori chicken as its own dish, use the grilled method below.

12 bone-in chicken thighs
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 2 medium lemons)
1 tablespoon peeled and finely chopped fresh ginger
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
2 teaspoons ground coriander
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons garam masala
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
Few drops of red and yellow food coloring (optional)
1 lemon, cut in half

1 Marinate the chicken: Remove the skin and trim excess fat from the chicken. With a sharp chef's knife, cut three or four long, diagonal slits on each thigh against the grain, almost to the bone.

2 In a large, shallow bowl, mix together the yogurt, lemon juice, ginger, garlic, coriander, cumin, garam masala, kosher salt, and cayenne. Stir in the food coloring, if using. Add the chicken, turning to coat and making sure that the marinade gets into all of the slits in the chicken. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator, at least 2 hours and up to 12 hours.

3 Roast the chicken: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil. Transfer the chicken from the marinade to the baking sheet, spacing the thighs evenly. Discard any remaining marinade. Roast until the juices run clear when the chicken is pierced and an instant-read thermometer in a meaty part of a thigh registers 170°F, about 45 minutes.

Squeeze the lemon halves over the chicken. Let it cool before using in the Chicken Tikka Masala recipe at left. Refrigerate if making ahead.

The author of Easy Indian Cooking, Suneeta Vaswani has been teaching Indian cooking for close to 30 years. ♦

Grill tandoori chicken for a stand-alone dish

Tandoori chicken is the first step to tikka masala, but it's also a classic Indian dish on its own. We tested the tandoori recipe two ways: roasted in the oven and grilled on a gas grill. We found that the roasted version was best in the tikka masala because the meat stayed more moist, but for eating as is, the grilled version had better flavor. So here are the grilling instructions for those times when you're in the mood for tandoori chicken. Follow the ingredient list and marinating instructions above,

then use the instructions here to grill the chicken.

NOTE: You'll need 1/4 cup melted unsalted butter, plus 1 extra lemon, cut into wedges, and 1 small sweet onion, cut into rings, for garnish, in addition to the ingredients for the marinade.

—The editors

To grill the chicken thighs: Heat a gas grill to medium high. Oil the grill liberally. Remove the chicken from the marinade and lay the chicken on the grill. Discard the marinade. Cover and cook until grill marks appear, 5 to 7 min-

utes. Using tongs, flip the chicken and continue to cook until the second side has grill marks, about 5 minutes more.

Reduce the heat to low and cook, covered, flipping occasionally, until it is no longer pink near the bone (cut into a thigh to check), 10 to 15 minutes for small thighs, 15 to 20 minutes for large. Transfer the chicken to a platter and let it rest for 5 minutes. Brush the chicken with the melted butter and squeeze lemon halves on top. Garnish with the lemon wedges and the sliced onion.

BY TONY ROSENFELD

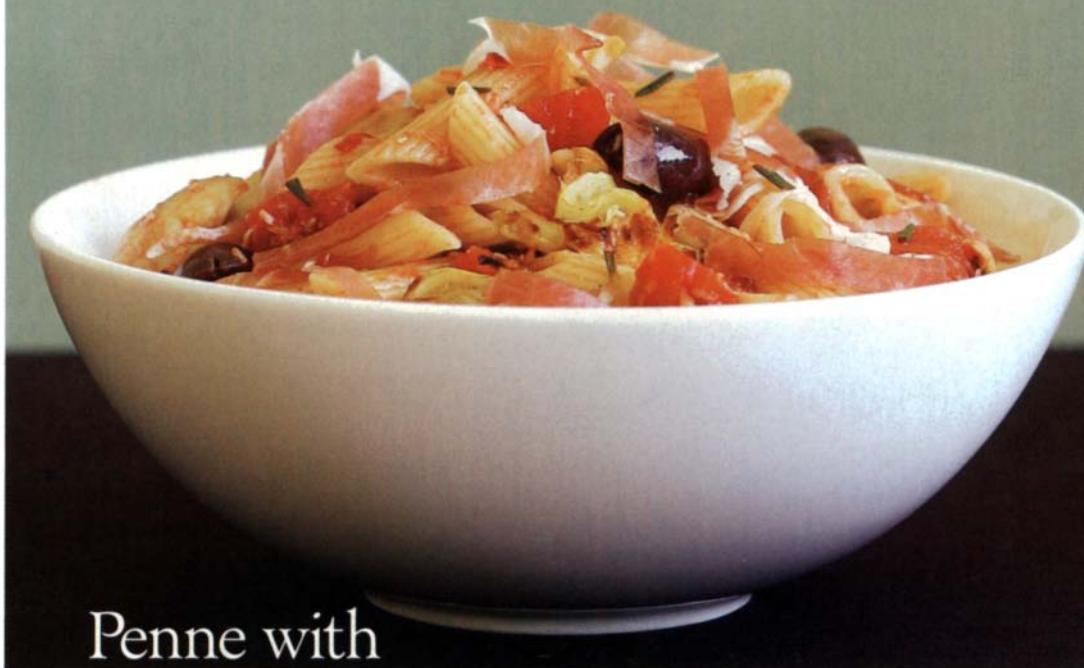
I have a roster of pasta dishes that I like to call on when I'm facing the perfect storm of culinary crises: I'm hungry, it's late, and the refrigerator looks bare. For these occasions, I've developed a little system. I always make sure to have a few staples on hand in the pantry, refrigerator, and freezer—things that will stay good almost indefinitely, are intensely flavorful, and quick to cook. I've found that by tossing a few of these ingredients together, I can get a wonderful pasta dinner on the table in little more than the time it takes to boil water.

This approach does involve planning ahead. I use each visit to the market as an opportunity to prepare for the unexpected, stocking up on some of my favorite canned and jarred ingredients as well as some pasta, of course. Items like capers, olives, roasted red peppers, wedges of good aged cheese, and slices of bacon or pancetta will all hold in the pantry or refrigerator for several weeks.

With just a few of these items in your kitchen, dinner is only minutes away. You can use the recipes I've developed on these pages or follow some common-sense tips on pairing flavors to make your own favorite pasta dinners (see the sidebar on the facing page).

Stock your cupboard with ingredients to make pasta dinners in a flash

Pastas



Penne with Tomatoes, Artichokes & Black Olives

Serves four.

I lay strips of prosciutto atop this pasta just before serving. It's a trick that cooks use with prosciutto on pizza to protect the delicate flavor and texture of the ham. The heat of the pasta just warms it up.

Kosher salt

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 13/4- or 14-ounce can artichoke bottoms (or hearts), drained, rinsed, and thinly sliced**
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**
- 2 15 1/2-ounce cans diced tomatoes**
- 1/2 cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 3/4 pound dried penne rigate**
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- 3 ounces very thinly sliced prosciutto (preferably imported), cut into thin strips (about 3/4 cup)**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Heat the oil and garlic in a large (12-inch) skillet over medium-low heat,

stirring occasionally, until the garlic becomes fragrant and starts to brown all over, about 4 minutes. Raise the heat to medium high, add the artichokes and red pepper flakes, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the artichokes start to brown, about 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes and their juices and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the olives and season generously with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and keep warm over low heat.

Meanwhile, cook the penne in the boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until it's just tender to the tooth (see the package for cooking time). Drain and return the pasta to its cooking pot. Add the sauce and about half the Parmigiano. Cook over medium-high heat for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing and stirring, to blend the flavors. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve immediately, scattering the prosciutto and remaining Parmigiano over each serving.

from the Pantry

How to create your own quick pastas

Having a strategically stocked pantry and fridge is a prerequisite to whipping up an impromptu weeknight pasta dinner. So use the lists below to help with shopping (most of the items have a long shelf-life), then return to this page again as inspiration for making up your own quick pasta dish.

You don't have to choose something from each category—for example, some of the best pasta dishes don't include any "hefty" ingredient at all. When creating combinations, it's helpful to think about an ingredient's predominant flavor note: salty, smoky, citrusy, rich, herby, sharp, tangy, briny, etc. I try to balance different types of flavors to keep things interesting.

If you want some concrete examples to get you started, you can't go wrong with a simple puttanesca (canned tomatoes, garlic, capers, and anchovies) or an Amitriciana (pancetta, canned tomatoes, and pecorino). Or try classic pairings like peas, pancetta, and porcini mushrooms, or cannellini beans, Parmigiano, and rosemary. Once you get the hang of it, you'll be coming up with your own favorites in no time.

Start with a flavor foundation

Cut and cook these ingredients, then toss into the finished pasta.

Bacon – cook until crisp, then crumble

Garlic – chop or mince and sauté until golden and fragrant

Onions – slice and cook until caramelized

Pancetta – cube and cook until crisp

Add a little heft

If you want your dish to feel a bit more substantial, these ingredients can help fill it out.

Artichokes (jarred or canned) – thinly slice and sauté briefly before adding to the pasta

Canned beans – try cannellini or chickpeas, which have a mild flavor that goes well with pasta.

Canned tuna – drain and crumble

Dried mushrooms – rehydrate, chop, and sauté briefly; use the soaking liquid for the sauce

Roasted red peppers (jarred)

Sun-dried tomatoes – use oil-packed tomatoes, which don't need to be rehydrated, and slice them thinly

Sauce it up

Add at least one of these liquidy ingredients to create a saucy consistency and a cohesive dish.

Canned tomatoes (diced) – simmer with other ingredients to form a quick, chunky sauce

Chicken broth – add to any sautéed ingredients, reduce, then mix with pasta for a brothier dish

Extra-virgin olive oil – use for sautéing and for drizzling before serving

Heavy cream – stir into a sauce, then reduce until thickened slightly

Pasta cooking water – if the dish seems dry as it's coming together, add a little reserved hot pasta water to help bind and moisten everything

Use cheese for richness

Grate, slice, or crumble these cheeses and toss with the hot pasta.

Feta

Goat cheese

Grana Padano

Parmigiano-Reggiano

Pecorino

Ricotta salata

Finish with punch

These can enliven the dish by adding a fresh, briny, acidic, or hot note, or even a bit of crunchy texture.

Anchovies – mash and add to sauce

Capers – use raw or fry until crisp

Crushed red pepper flakes

Fresh breadcrumbs – toss with olive oil and sauté until toasted

Fresh herbs

Frozen peas

Lemon – zest, juice, or both

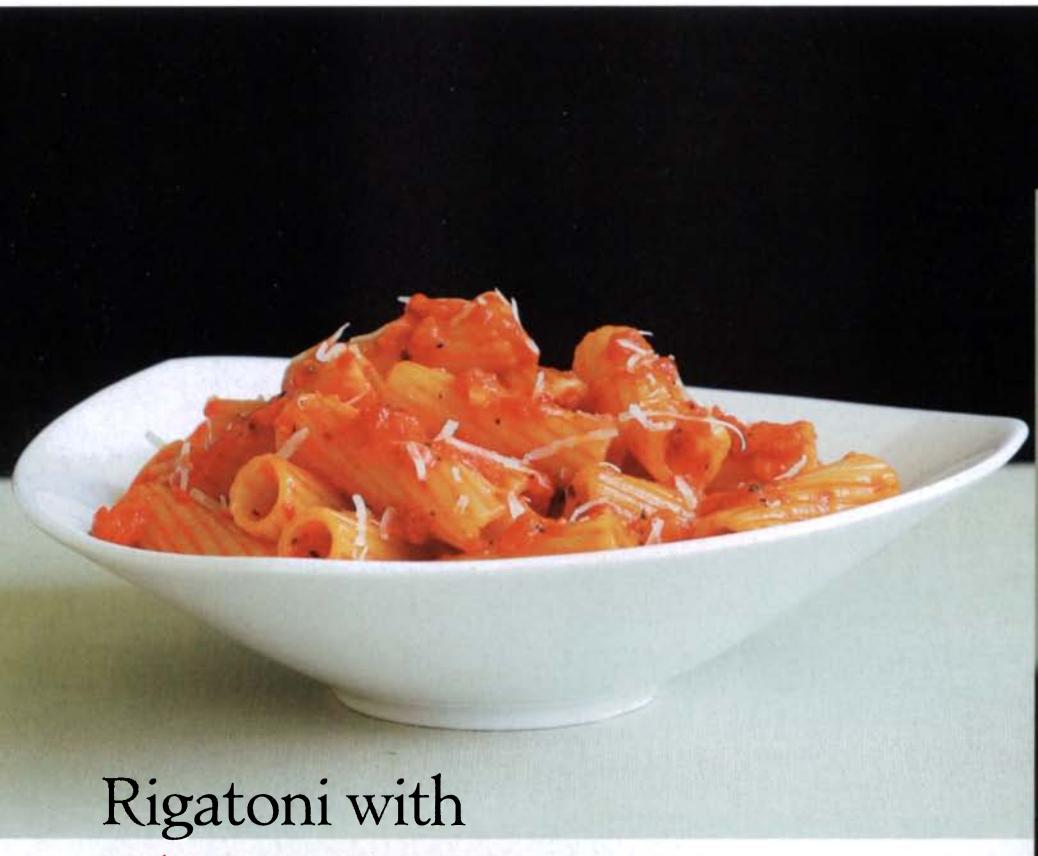
Pine nuts – toast until golden

Pitted olives – Kalamatas or Gaetas

Prosciutto – add thin strips at the end

Vinegar – sherry, red-wine, or balsamic

Download a printable pasta pantry checklist at finecooking.com



Rigatoni with Red Pepper & Parmigiano Cream Sauce

Serves four.

The combination of roasted red peppers and cream gives this sauce a rich, satisfying feel. You could stir in some sautéed cauliflower or Italian sausage to add a little more substance.

Kosher salt
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 12-ounce jar roasted red peppers, drained and thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
3/4 cup homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Freshly ground black pepper
3/4 pound dried rigatoni or penne rigate

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Heat the oil and garlic in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium heat until the garlic sizzles steadily for

about 1 minute and just starts to brown around the edges. Add the roasted red peppers, thyme, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, for a couple of minutes to heat through. Add the chicken broth and sherry vinegar. Raise the heat to medium high and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, let cool for a couple of minutes, and then transfer to a blender or food processor and purée.

Return the puréed pepper mixture to the sauté pan. Stir in the cream and 3/4 cup of the Parmigiano and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Meanwhile, cook the rigatoni in the boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until it's just tender to the tooth (see the package for cooking time). Drain and add the pasta to the sauté pan. Cook over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing and stirring, to blend the flavors and slightly thicken the sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve immediately, sprinkled with the remaining cheese and a few grinds of black pepper.



Spaghetti with Garlic, Hot Pepper & Pecorino

Serves four.

This dish is a cross between two Italian classics. The garlic and red pepper flakes are the base for Spaghetti Aglio, Olio & Peperoncino, while the black pepper and pecorino pair up in Spaghetti Pepe & Cacio. Here, they form a rather tasty mix.

Kosher salt
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 cloves garlic, cut in half and smashed
Heaping 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
3/4 pound dried spaghetti
3/4 cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano (for more on pecorinos, see p. 86)
Freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Heat the oil and garlic in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium-low heat, stirring,

Fettuccine with

Tuna, Lemon & Fried Capers

Serves four.

I like pairing tuna with strong flavors that can stand up to it. In this recipe, crisp capers, thin slivers of garlic, and bright strips of lemon zest do just that.

Kosher salt

1 lemon, scrubbed

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling

1/4 cup small (nonpareil) capers, rinsed, drained, and patted dry

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 12-ounce or 2 6-ounce cans solid white tuna in water, drained well

1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

3/4 pound dried fettuccine

Freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Using a zester tool (called a channel knife), zest the lemon into thin strips, or, using a vegetable peeler, shave off the zest, then slice into very thin strips. Juice the lemon to get 2 tablespoons juice.

Heat 1/4 cup of the oil in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium heat. Add the capers and cook until they start to brown and get crisp, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the lemon zest and cook until it starts to crisp and curl up, about 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the capers and lemon zest to a plate lined with a paper towel—it's fine if a few capers remain in the pan.

Reduce the heat to medium low, add the garlic to the remaining oil in the pan and cook, stirring, until it browns lightly but doesn't burn, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the tuna and red pepper flakes and cook until the tuna just heats through, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Meanwhile, cook the fettuccine in the boiling salted water, stirring often, until it's just tender to the tooth (see the package for cooking time). Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta water and drain the pasta.

Return the sauté pan to medium heat. Add the drained pasta, 1/4 cup of the reserved pasta water, 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice, and the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Cook, tossing and stirring, for 1 to 2 minutes to blend the flavors. If the pasta isn't tender, add the remaining cooking water and continue to cook and stir until done. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more lemon juice.

Serve immediately, drizzled with a little olive oil and sprinkled with the capers, lemon strips, parsley, and a few grinds of black pepper.

flavor tip:

It's not just the sauce that needs seasoning. Tease out the nutty flavor of pasta by adding a couple of tablespoons of kosher salt to the cooking water. The water should taste salty, like the ocean.

until the garlic becomes fragrant and starts to brown all over, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the red pepper flakes and rosemary, cook for 30 seconds, and then remove from the heat.

Cook the spaghetti in the boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until it's just tender to the tooth (see the package for cooking time). Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta water and drain the pasta.

Return the sauté pan to medium heat and fish out and discard the garlic. Add the drained pasta and 1/4 cup of the reserved pasta water. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing and stirring, to blend the flavors. If the pasta isn't tender, add the remainder of the cooking water and continue to cook and stir until done. Toss with half of the pecorino and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Season with salt and more pepper to taste.

Serve immediately, sprinkled with the remaining pecorino and a few grinds of black pepper.



MENU

Manchego Marinated
in Olive Oil & Herbs

Jamón Serrano

Olives & Peppers on a Pick
with Scallion Vinaigrette

Crispy Potatoes with
Tangy Tomato Sauce

Sautéed Mushrooms with
Garlic & Parsley

Sautéed Chorizo with
Red Wine

Seared Shrimp with
Pimentón & Sherry

Toasted Bread with
Chocolate





Make It a Tapas Party!

An impressive spread of authentic Spanish nibbles sets the mood for a memorable fiesta

BY SARAH JAY

Ever since living in Spain 17 years ago and falling in love, first with the food, and then, much later, with my future husband, I've been stuck on that country's wonderful cuisine. There's paella and gazpacho, of course, but I think Spain's most brilliant invention is its tradition of tapas. Order a glass of wine or a beer at a bar, and alongside you'll be served a little morsel of something delicious. That's a tapa. The concept also plays out in homes. When I visit my mother-in-law in Madrid, dinner is often just a spread of the most basic tapas—cheeses, cured meats, olives, perhaps a salad—and we all just nibble on what we please. Dress up the dishes a bit, and you have the makings for a great party.

So the next time you're casting about for an idea for a different kind of dinner gathering, you can make it easy on yourself and fun for your guests by serving tapas. The dishes I'm offering here are completely typical of what you'd find in Spain: They're rustic, earthy, a little bit lusty, and utterly easy.

Recently I hosted this tapas party for some new friends. The tapas did the magical thing they always do: They loosened up the crowd and got the party rolling. And I was relaxed, too. That's because I prepped the heck out of the recipes (following my timeline on p. 79), so it was smooth sailing once people started to walk through the door. It was one of the best parties I've thrown in a long time.





Manchego Marinated in Olive Oil & Herbs

Serves eight.

This is an easy way to make supermarket-quality manchego cheese taste extra special. Eat the cheese within 3 days. (I keep the infused olive oil refrigerated and use it within 10 days for sautéing.)

1 cup extra-virgin olive oil; more if needed
3 large sprigs thyme
2 4-inch sprigs rosemary
1 small dried red chile, cut in half or thirds
8 ounces manchego (more aged is better), rind cut off, cut into ½- to ¾-inch cubes

In a small saucepan, heat the 1 cup oil and the thyme, rosemary, and chile over medium heat until the oil is hot (160°F) and looks shimmery, about 2 minutes. Set aside to cool completely at room temperature.

Put the manchego in a glass or ceramic bowl. Pour the olive oil, herbs, and chile on top. Add more oil to cover, if needed. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Remove from the refrigerator a few hours before the party to return the oil to room temperature.

To serve, transfer everything to a pretty bowl, with toothpicks alongside for spear-ing the cheese.



Olives & Peppers on a Pick with Scallion Vinaigrette

Serves eight; yields about 40 skewers.

These little skewers are good with just olives and peppers, or you can add a third element, such as pickled onions or feta.

1 lemon
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 small scallion, white and light green parts very thinly sliced (to yield 1 tablespoon)
½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
½ teaspoon seeded, minced red serrano chile or jalapeño
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
7 jarred piquillo peppers (for sources, see p. 92) or 2 jarred roasted red peppers
40 small pitted green olives (from about a 2½-ounce jar)
40 pickled sour cocktail onions (from about two 3½-fluid-ounce jars) (optional)
12 ounces feta (creamy feta holds together better than dry, crumbly feta), cut into ½- to ¾-inch cubes (optional)

Finely grate enough of the lemon zest to get ¼ teaspoon packed zest. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze to get 2 tablespoons of juice. Put the zest and juice in a small bowl. Whisk in the olive oil, scallion, thyme, chile, and salt and pepper to taste. Let the vinaigrette sit for at least 20 minutes (or up to 12 hours in the fridge; bring to room temperature before using) to meld the flavors and soften the scallion.

Cut the peppers lengthwise into ½-inch-wide strands, then cut the strands in half crosswise—you'll need 40 pieces of pepper. Fold a piece of pepper in half and thread it onto a toothpick. Spear an olive onto the pick. Then spear either an onion or a cube of feta on the end, if using. Set the pick in a shallow serving dish. Repeat with the remaining ingredients. If not serving right away, refrigerate.

About 30 minutes before serving, give the vinaigrette a good whisk to emulsify as best you can, then drizzle it over the olive picks.

Prep ahead for a stress-free party

If the following timeline looks long, it's only because I've broken it down into very small steps.

Up to 3 days ahead:

Make the tomato sauce for potatoes.

The day or evening before:

Prep and refrigerate:

Make the marinated manchego.

Make the scallion vinaigrette.

Assemble the olive and pepper picks.

Slice the chorizo, put in bowl with the thyme sprigs.

Peel the shrimp and put in a paper-towel-lined bowl. Put the peeled garlic, washed chives, and washed lemon in a smaller bowl.

Wash and cut up mushrooms; put in a damp-paper-towel-lined bowl along with peeled garlic and washed parsley.

Set jamón on serving plate; cover with plastic.

Prep and keep at room temperature:

Cut up chocolate for toasted bread.

Slice bread for the chocolate toasts and for the chorizo and store in separate zip-top bags.

Wash the potatoes, put them on a sheet pan, along with the pre-measured oil in a measuring cup, and salt and rosemary (not chopped) in dishes.

Measure pimentón and red pepper flakes for shrimp into a small dish.

Measure sherry for the shrimp into a small dish.

Measure sherry vinegar for the mushrooms into a small dish.

2 hours before guests arrive:

Put the manchego in a serving bowl and set out.

Measure red wine for the chorizo into a small dish.

1 hour before guests arrive:

Drizzle scallion vinaigrette over the olive and pepper picks and set out.

Set out the jamón.

Sprinkle shrimp with the salt and toss; refrigerate.

Slice chives for shrimp, wrap back up in damp towel.

Slice garlic for shrimp and put in the dish with the pimentón.

Grate lemon zest for shrimp into a small dish; set with the shrimp.

Chop garlic and parsley for the mushrooms, wrap in damp towel, return to mushroom bowl.

Chop rosemary for potatoes. Toss potatoes with oil, salt, and rosemary.

15 minutes before guests arrive:

Start roasting the potatoes (set timer for 15 minutes).

Reheat the tomato sauce.

When guests arrive:

Offer wine or sherry and as people nibble on the manchego, jamón, and olive and pepper picks, mingle and relax. (Turn the potatoes when the timer goes off, and set it twice more for 15 minute intervals.)

Take a few minutes out to cook the mushrooms and serve them.

When the potatoes are done, set them out with the warm sauce.

Chat with guests, then take 5 minutes to cook chorizo and serve with bread.

At a break in conversation, take 5 minutes to cook and serve the shrimp.

When you're ready for dessert:

Make the toasted bread with chocolate.

Tip: Choose all your serving plates and platters the night before and tag them with the dish that will go in each one.

Tip: Try to start out the party with an empty sink and dish rack (or dishwasher) so dishes that pile up during the party have a place to go.

Tip: Tape the recipes to a cabinet or wall near the stovetop so they're in view (but off your countertops) as you're cooking during the party.

Tip: Make up "kits" for the dishes with last-minute cooking. Prep all the ingredients, nestle them together in a big bowl, then set in the fridge or right on the pan you'll use for cooking. When it's time to cook, you can grab the bowl, and everything is ready.



Stocking your Spanish pantry



JAMÓN SERRANO ⑥

Sliced paper thin and set on a plate alone or with manchego cheese, jamón (pronounced ha-MOHN) serrano is the simplest tapa of all. This cured ham looks just like Italian prosciutto, but its unique curing and aging process translates into more complex and intense flavors. Salty, sweet, rich, and mellow, jamón serrano surely makes the best ham sandwich you'll ever have. It's just starting to appear in regular supermarkets in the United States and is usually available in specialty food shops.

For the most authentic Spanish flavor in your tapas, seek out these ingredients in upscale supermarkets or see *Where to Buy It* on p. 92 for mail-order sources.

CHORIZO ① Consisting primarily of pork, pimentón, and garlic, this dry-cured sausage adds a meaty note to stews, pastas, and eggs. Some dry-cured chorizos are hard and ready to eat. Others are softer (though not raw) and benefit from a little cooking; that's what you want for the sautéed chorizo recipe on p. 82.

SHERRY VINEGAR ② Sharply acidic with sweet sherry undertones, this vinegar has become my everyday vinegar at home. Use it instead of red-wine vinegar and you'll never go back.

MANCHEGO ③ Spain's most well-known cheese is made from sheep's milk and always features a basket weave pattern on its rind. Look for aged manchegos (1 year or older), which have a firmer texture and nutty flavor.

PIQUILLO PEPPERS ④ These point-tipped little peppers (piquillo means "little beak") are slow-roasted over a wood fire, peeled by hand, and canned or jarred in nothing but their juices. They have a wonderfully sweet flavor with a kick. Traditionally they're stuffed with salt cod, but I use them in pastas, sandwiches, omelets, sauces, or anywhere else I might use a roasted bell pepper.

PIMENTÓN ⑤ This is Spanish smoked paprika, and it can be sweet (dulce), spicy (picante), or sweet-spicy (agridulce). Use it as you would paprika, and you'll find its smoky flavor adds an intriguing background note to whatever you're cooking.



Crispy Potatoes with Tangy Tomato Sauce (Patatas Bravas)

Serves eight.

Roasting the potatoes in a good amount of olive oil gives them a crispy fried flavor without the hassle of deep frying. The sauce can be made up to three days ahead.

FOR THE SAUCE:

1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup chopped onion (½ small)
½ cup chopped carrot (1 small)
2 medium cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
1 tablespoon dry white wine
¼ teaspoon sweet pimentón (or paprika)
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
1½ cups canned tomatoes with juice, chopped coarsely
3 large sprigs thyme
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon Tabasco, more to taste
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
¼ teaspoon sherry vinegar

FOR THE POTATOES:

2½ pounds (about 8 medium) Yukon Gold, white, or red potatoes, scrubbed and cut into 1-inch pieces (no need to peel)
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary (optional)

Make the sauce: In a small (1- or 2-quart) saucepan, heat the 1½ tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, car-



rot, and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and let it reduce until almost evaporated, about 1 minute. Add the pimentón and cumin and stir for about 15 seconds. Add the tomatoes and juice, thyme sprigs, sugar, Tabasco, ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, and a few grinds of pepper.

Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, to reduce the sauce somewhat and intensify its flavor. This should take about 1 hour; depending on how much juice you started with, you may need to add up to ½ cup water during simmering to keep the consistency saucy rather than dry.

Fish out the spent thyme sprigs. Purée the sauce with an immersion blender or a regular blender until it's smooth and creamy; you can thin with a little water if needed. Stir in the sherry vinegar. Taste and add salt and pepper, if needed. The sauce should be slightly spicy, and you should have about 1½ cups.

Roast the potatoes: Heat the oven to 425°F. Toss the potatoes with the olive oil, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and the rosemary (if using) on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast, turning the potatoes with a metal spatula every 15 minutes, until they're browned and crisp outside and tender inside, about 45 minutes.

Put the potatoes in a serving dish and put the sauce in a small dish next to the potatoes, along with a spoon.

Sautéed Mushrooms with Garlic & Parsley

Serves eight.

- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 pound white or cremini mushrooms, washed well, trimmed, and cut into quarters (or sixths, if large)**
- Kosher salt**
- 5 to 6 medium cloves garlic, minced (1½ tablespoons)**
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**

Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over high heat until it's hot and shimmering. Add the mushrooms, season with ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, stir to coat in the oil, then let the mushrooms cook undisturbed until the liquid released by the mushrooms evaporates and they're deep golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir and continue sautéing, stirring occasionally, until most sides are nicely browned, 3 to 5 minutes more.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the garlic, and cook just to soften it, 15 to 30 seconds. Add the vinegar and stir, scraping the bottom of the pan, until the vinegar evaporates, about 15 seconds. Remove the pan from the heat and toss in the parsley. Season to taste with more salt, if you like. Transfer to a dish and serve with toothpicks for spearing the mushrooms or a serving spoon for putting on individual plates.

Vinos for tapas

Dry sherry is a traditional partner for tapas. The nutty, briny qualities of a fino or manzanilla sherry match perfectly with the tangy, salty, and savory flavors in the tapas. So when guests arrive, offer them a small glass of chilled sherry to sip as they begin to enjoy the spread. Try Emilio Lustau Puerto Fino Sherry (\$16) or Bodega Hidalgo Manzanilla "La Gitana" Sherry (\$12 for 500ml bottle).

As for wines, **crisp dry whites** with citrus and mineral notes, such as Albariño, and **dry rosés** with tart red berry and citrus fruit are both versatile tapas wines. I'd recommend 2004 Vionta Albariño, Rias Baixas (\$14); 2004 Nora Albariño, Rias Baixas (\$14); 2005 A to Z Rosé from Oregon (\$14); and 2006 Goats Do Roam Rosé (\$12) from South Africa.

Finally, a **ruby port** would be delicious with the Toasted Bread with Chocolate. Good ones include Graham's Six Grapes (\$16) and Fonseca Bin 27 (\$16).

—Tim Gaiser, contributing editor



Sautéed Chorizo with Red Wine

Serves eight.

You'll need a softer cured chorizo here, not the very firm types that are meant to be eaten without cooking (see sidebar, p. 80). You can find domestic cured chorizos in Hispanic markets and gourmet markets. For sources, see p. 92.

**3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ pounds cured but soft chorizo, cut into ½-inch-thick slices
½ cup dry red wine
Good country bread, cut into large cubes**

Heat the olive oil in a large (12-inch) skillet over medium heat. Add the chorizo slices and cook until they begin to turn a deep brown on one side, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the chorizo is deeply browned all over, about 5 minutes more. Carefully add the wine (be ready in case it flames) and let it simmer, scraping the pan to deglaze it, until it has reduced somewhat but is still saucy, 1 to 3 minutes. Pour the chorizo and juices into a dish. Serve with the bread, for dipping into the sauce.

Seared Shrimp with Pimentón & Sherry

Serves eight.

**1½ pounds large (31 to 40 count) shrimp, peeled and deveined, patted dry with paper towels
Kosher salt
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
6 medium cloves garlic, very thinly sliced
Heaping ¼ teaspoon sweet pimentón (or paprika)
Heaping ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
3 tablespoons fino sherry
¼ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1½ tablespoons thinly sliced chives
Fresh lemon juice to taste**

Sprinkle the shrimp with ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, toss, and let sit for 10 minutes (or refrigerate for up to 1 hour).

In a large (12-inch) skillet, heat the olive oil on high heat. Pat the shrimp dry with paper towels and add them to the skillet. Sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon kosher salt and sear until they're pink and a little golden on one side, about 1 minute. Sprinkle the garlic, pimentón, and red pepper flakes over the shrimp, and sauté, stirring, until the shrimp are almost completely pink, about 1 minute. Add the sherry and cook, stirring to deglaze the bottom of the pan, until the shrimp are pink all over (the sherry will evaporate quickly but you should still have some juices in the pan).

Remove from the heat. Toss with the lemon zest and chives. Pour the shrimp and juices into a serving dish, squeeze on lemon juice to taste, and serve.

Toasted Bread with Chocolate

Serves eight.

Bread and chocolate is a popular snack for kids in Spain. Adding a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt, a twist I picked up from celebrity chef José Andrés, is a sophisticated touch.

**8 ½-inch-thick slices good bread, such as a rustic peasant bread or a real baguette
Best-quality extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
4 ounces best-quality bittersweet chocolate, very coarsely chopped (scant 1 cup)
Sea salt, kosher salt, or any specialty salt**

Position a rack 4 inches from the broiler element and heat to high. Put the bread on a baking sheet and toast until light golden on both sides, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Drizzle the bread with olive oil. Distribute the chocolate evenly on top of the bread. Turn off the broiler and return the bread to the oven until the residual heat melts the chocolate, about 1 minute. Smooth the chocolate with a table knife, if you want. Sprinkle a pinch of salt on each slice and serve.



*Sarah Jay is
Fine Cooking's
executive editor. ♦*

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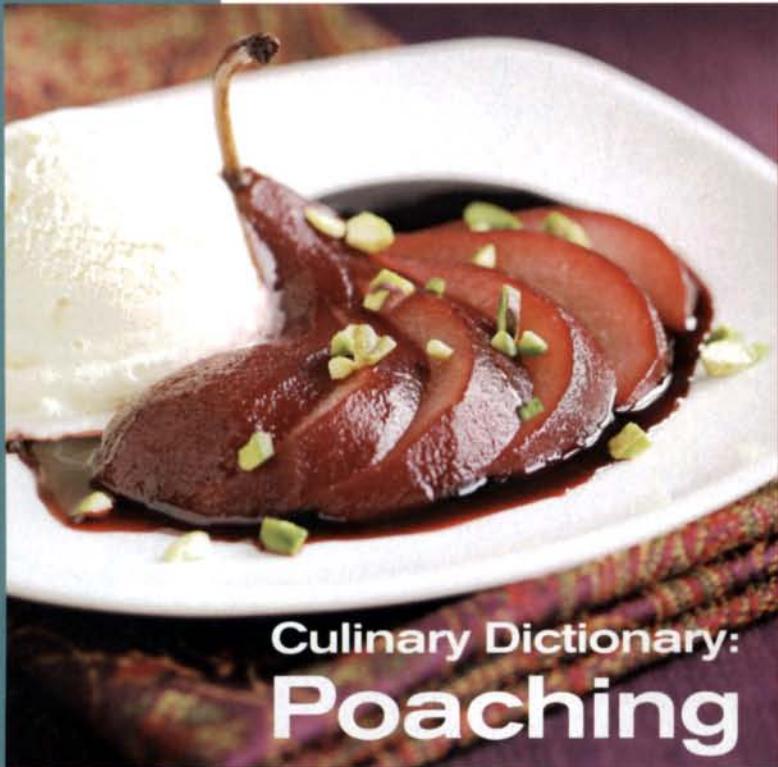
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Culinary Dictionary: Poaching

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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

Poaching is a gentle method of cooking in barely simmering liquid, meaning that the surface of the liquid shimmers and the few bubbles that appear break the surface slowly. The temperature of liquid in this state is between 170° and 185°F. As long as the liquid isn't allowed to simmer rapidly or boil, poaching keeps poultry, meat, fish, and fruit moist and tender, with flavors that are pure and elemental. Chicken and veal are usually poached in broth, and fish is cooked in a court bouillon, a delicate broth made from vegetables, herbs, and an acid like vinegar, wine, or lemon juice. Fruit is typically poached in simple syrup (sugar dissolved in water) flavored with wine and spices.

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate

Red-Wine-Poached Pears with Star Anise & Pistachios

Serves four.

- 2 1/4 cups dry red wine, such as Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 whole star anise
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Pinch kosher salt
- 2 ripe but slightly firm pears, peeled, halved through the stem, and cored
- 1 pint vanilla ice cream
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped, lightly toasted pistachios

Combine the wine, sugar, star anise, vanilla, salt, and 3/4 cup water in a 3- to 4-quart saucepan that's wide enough to fit the halved pears in a snug single layer. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar. Reduce the heat to low, add the pears, and cook at a bare simmer (basting occasionally if there are any un-submerged parts) until just tender when pierced with a wooden skewer or toothpick, 15 to 30 minutes depending on ripeness. Remove the pot from the heat and allow the pears to macerate in the poaching liquid for at least 2 hours, or discard the star anise and refrigerate in the liquid overnight.

Transfer 2/3 cup of the poaching liquid to a small saucepan and boil over high heat until reduced by half and slightly syrupy, about 5 minutes. Let cool. Spoon a little syrup onto each of four serving plates. Place the pears, cut side down, on a cutting board and, holding the knife at a 45-degree angle, slice them lengthwise about 1/3 inch thick almost to the stem, so the slices remain attached at the stem end. Transfer the pears to the serving plates and press down gently to fan them out, exposing the lighter centers. Serve the pears with a scoop of ice cream and sprinkle with the pistachios.



How to roast & peel fresh chestnuts

- 1 With a paring knife, score an X on the flat side of each nut. Place them on a baking sheet and roast in a 375°F oven until the X opens up like a crown, about 15 minutes.
- 2 The outer shell and, more important, the inner skin should be easy to peel off; if not, roast a few minutes more. Peel while warm or the inner skin will become difficult to remove.

Behind the scenes at a *Fine Cooking* photo shoot

The food shown in our photos is always real and made according to the recipe by our talented food stylist, Allison Ehri. Often we ask her to create a side dish to act as a visual serving suggestion for the star attraction. The kale shown here is one of her creations, and it's so pretty and tasty that we decided to share it with you.



Kale with Pancetta & Marjoram

Yields about 4 cups; serves four.

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 ounces pancetta, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dice
1 large yellow onion (12 ounces), halved lengthwise, trimmed, and thinly sliced lengthwise (about 3 cups)
Freshly ground black pepper
2 large cloves garlic, chopped
2½ pounds kale (about 2 bunches), stemmed, leaves torn into large pieces, rinsed well, and drained but not dried
2 teaspoons chopped fresh marjoram
½ to **¼** teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
Kosher salt
1 teaspoon red-wine vinegar

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a wide 8-quart pot with a lid over medium heat until shimmering. Add the pancetta and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the onion and a few generous grinds of pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown around the edges, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until the onion is lightly caramelized, 4 to 6 minutes.

Pack the kale into the pot and sprinkle with the marjoram, red pepper flakes, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Cover the kale and let it wilt for 1 minute. Toss the kale and onions together with tongs, cover, and cook, removing the lid to toss occasionally, until just tender, about 10 minutes (taste a piece to check). Toss with the vinegar, the remaining tablespoon oil and, if necessary, additional salt and pepper to taste.

8 secrets for a moist & juicy roast turkey

A perfectly roasted turkey is the holy grail of every cook on Thanksgiving. To help you achieve this goal, we've collected some tips shared by Tom Douglas in his article on small Thanksgiving feasts (pp. 44–50), and we've added a few of our own.

- 1** Choose a fresh turkey instead of a frozen one. Ice crystals that form during freezing damage a turkey's muscle cells. When the bird thaws and roasts, fluids leak more readily from the damaged cells, drying out the meat.
- 2** Roast two small turkeys rather than one large one. Smaller turkeys roast more evenly than large ones, so for feeding a crowd, two small turkeys are a better option. They'll cook quicker, too.
- 3** Brine the turkey. A turkey soaked in a salt-water solution absorbs both the salt and the water, so it's moister to begin with as well as seasoned on the inside. You can flavor a brine as well. Visit our Web site (finecooking.com) for more details on brining.
- 4** Rub soft butter under the skin. As it melts, it bastes the turkey and adds buttery flavor. For even more flavor, you can add herbs and spices to the butter (see p. 47).
- 5** Truss loosely, or not at all. Legs tied up tightly against the sides of the turkey take longer to roast, putting the breast meat in jeopardy of overcooking while the legs take their time.
- 6** Roast the turkey upside down at first. Placing the turkey, breast side down, on a V-rack for the first hour or so of roasting essentially allows it to baste itself. Any marks left by the rack will disappear once you flip the turkey over and finish roasting it.
- 7** Don't overcook it. Use a thermometer, either instant-read or probe-style, to monitor the temperature in the thickest part of the thigh (be careful not to hit the bone). You're aiming for 170°F.
- 8** Let the turkey rest before carving. The intense heat of the oven forces the juices into the center of the bird, so after roasting, let the turkey rest for roughly 20 minutes (enough time to make the gravy). The juices will redistribute, and you'll get moister slices.

Download fixes for the top 10 Thanksgiving dinner disasters at finecooking.com

Pecorino Sweet & Peppery

Pecorino is often misunderstood. To those who buy it in American supermarkets, it's a dry, tangy, oversalted hard cheese that's hardly fit for grating onto pasta let alone enjoying with wine and crackers. But there's much more to pecorino than meets the aisles. There are dozens of varieties, each with its own texture and flavor. In some of its best versions, pecorino is a rich, earthy, pleasantly sharp and peppery cheese with a firm yet creamy texture that's perfect for nibbling.

Pecorino (derived from *pecora*, Italian for sheep) is a sheep's milk cheese that's been produced all over central and southern Italy since well before the rise of the Roman Empire. Made with either pasteurized or unpasteurized milk, pecorino can be aged anywhere from 20 days—resulting in a soft-textured, mild-flavored cheese with an edible rind—to up to a year for harder, more pungent cheeses. Its many varieties are grouped into four main government-protected regional categories (D.O.P.) subject to strict production rules: Toscano, made in Tuscany; Sardo, from the is-

land of Sardinia; Siciliano, produced in Sicily; and Romano, mainly from the countryside around Rome.

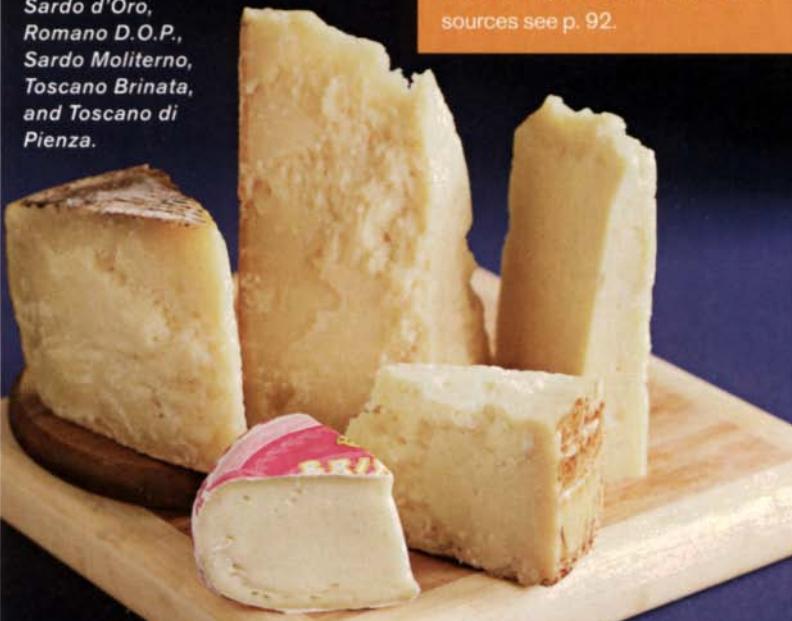
The last, which is saltier than other pecorinos, is primarily a grating cheese when aged. The mass-produced pecorinos we're used to seeing in grocery stores are also romanos, but they're a far cry from their artisanal cousins.

—Laura Giannatempo,
assistant editor

What we tasted

We tasted ten kinds of artisanal pecorinos alongside a couple of supermarket brands. Our favorites among the artisanal table cheeses were a tangy, buttery, medium-aged Pecorino Toscano from Mugello and a peppery, deep-flavored, medium-aged Pecorino Sardo Moliterno. An aged Pecorino Toscano from Pienza was also pleasantly nutty and rich. Between the two supermarket brands we tasted, Boar's Head imported Romano was less sharp and salty than Locatelli. For grating and tossing with pasta, we recommend an artisanal Pecorino Romano. A good cheese shop might carry several varieties of pecorino; for mail-order sources see p. 92.

A sampling of Italian pecorinos, clockwise from top center:
Sardo d'Oro, Romano D.O.P., Sardo Moliterno, Toscano Brinata, and Toscano di Pienza.



Cornbread—for snacking or stuffing

Store-bought bread is fine for making most kinds of bread stuffing from the Cooking Without Recipes story on pp. 51–55, but for cornbread stuffing, I think it's best to make your own. This cornbread, adapted from a recipe by *Fine Cooking* contributing editor Pam Anderson, is noteworthy because it doesn't call for any wheat flour, so it's bursting with corn flavor. Use it to make cornbread stuffing or serve it warm, slathered with butter and honey or maple syrup.

Buttermilk Cornbread

Yields 1 1/4 pounds cornbread; serves eight to ten as cornbread or makes about 8 cups crumbled cornbread for bread stuffing.

1½ cups yellow cornmeal, preferably stone-ground	¼ teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon granulated sugar	1¼ cups buttermilk
1½ teaspoons baking powder	1 large egg
¾ teaspoon table salt	1 large egg yolk
	2 tablespoons unsalted butter or rendered bacon fat, cut into two pieces

Position a rack in the center of the oven and place a 10- to 11-inch cast-iron skillet or a 9-inch-square metal baking pan on the rack. Heat the oven to 450°F.

Bring a small kettle of water to a boil. While the water comes to a boil, put ½ cup of the cornmeal in a medium mixing bowl. In a small bowl, combine the remaining 1 cup cornmeal with the sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda.

Pour ½ cup of the boiling water into the ½ cup of cornmeal and stir until the cornmeal becomes a thick mush. Whisk the buttermilk into the mush until smooth, then whisk in the egg and egg yolk.

When the oven and pan are fully heated, stir the dry ingredients into the buttermilk mixture. Remove the hot pan from the oven and add the butter or bacon fat, carefully swirling it around the pan until it's melted and has coated the pan—it's fine if the butter browns. Immediately pour the excess butter or fat into the batter, stir to combine, then scrape the batter into the skillet or pan.

Bake until the cornbread has pulled away from the sides of the pan and is golden on top, 18 to 20 minutes. Immediately turn the cornbread out onto a cooling rack. Cool for 5 to 10 minutes before serving, or cool completely if using for stuffing.

leftovers:

Turkey, take two

Soup isn't an unusual destination for leftover roast turkey, but this soup is anything but ordinary. Based on a recipe for Chicken & Tortilla Soup from a previous issue by *Fine Cooking's* former editor in chief and publisher, Martha Holmberg, this Mexican-style soup is bursting with all sorts of interesting flavors and textures. It's light yet satisfying, and it tastes completely different from the traditional Thanksgiving flavors, so it's a perfect encore to the big feast.

Turkey Tortilla Soup

Serves two as a main course; may be doubled.

1 tablespoon vegetable oil, plus 1½ to 2 cups for frying the tortillas

½ cup finely diced yellow onion

1½ tablespoons chili powder

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 quart homemade turkey or chicken broth, or low-salt canned chicken broth

6 cilantro sprigs

Kosher salt

3 6-inch corn tortillas, cut into ¼-inch-wide strips

1 cup shredded or medium-diced leftover roast turkey

¾ cup medium-diced fresh tomato

½ cup cooked fresh corn kernels (or substitute thawed frozen corn)

½ cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained

GARNISHES:

½ to 1 ripe avocado, medium-diced

¼ cup crumbled queso fresco or feta cheese

3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

2 tablespoons sour cream, or to taste (optional)

½ lime, cut into wedges

Heat the 1 tablespoon oil in a medium (3-quart) saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until softened and just beginning to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the chili powder and tomato paste and cook, stirring, for 15 to 30 seconds; don't let the chili powder scorch. Pour in the broth and scrape the bottom of the pan with the spoon to



loosen any cooked-on bits. Add the cilantro sprigs and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, until the broth has reduced by about a third and is very flavorful, 20 to 30 minutes. Discard the cilantro sprigs and season to taste with salt.

While the broth reduces, fry the tortilla strips:

Line a plate or tray with two layers of paper towels. Pour 1 inch of vegetable oil into a small, high-sided saucepan (a 6-inch-diameter pan needs about 1½ cups of oil). If you have a candy thermometer, attach it to the pot. Heat the oil over medium heat until it reaches 350°F, or until a tortilla strip sizzles immediately when dipped into the

oil. Add 8 to 10 tortilla strips and scrunch them with tongs for a few seconds to give them a wavy shape. Fry until the bubbling subsides and the strips are crisp and very lightly browned, about 1 minute. Transfer to the paper towels to drain, and sprinkle with a little salt while they're still hot. Repeat with the remaining strips.

Divide the turkey, tomato, corn, beans, and tortilla strips between two large soup bowls. If necessary, reheat the broth until it's piping hot. Pour the broth over the ingredients in the bowls. Garnish with the avocado, cheese, cilantro, dollops of sour cream (if using), and big squeezes of lime juice. Serve immediately.

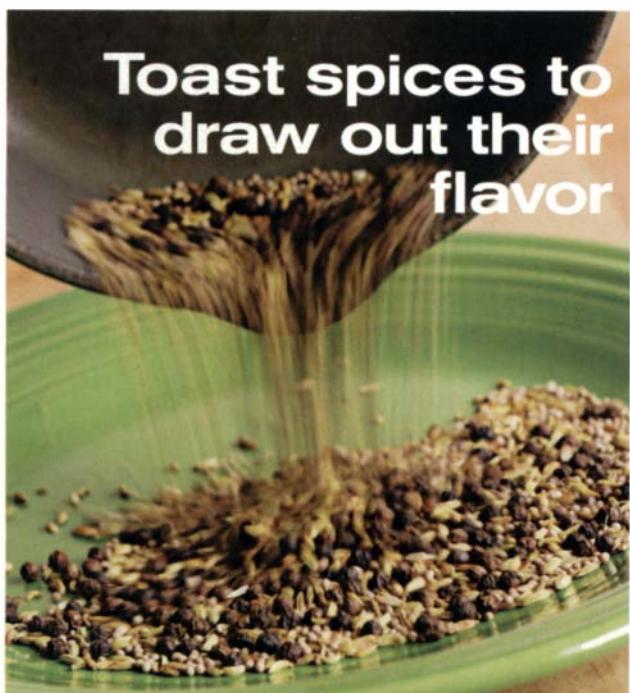
basic skills

Whether they're whole or ground, spices generally taste better when they're toasted. The heat opens up their complex flavors, making them full and smooth instead of harsh and raw. Toasting is quick and easy, as you'll see in the tortilla soup recipe above and in the recipes for Smoked Paprika and Fennel Seed Roast Turkey (p. 47) and Chicken Tikka Masala (p. 70).

To toast whole or ground spices, put them in a dry skillet over medium-low heat and stir

frequently just until they become very fragrant and darken slightly (or pop, in the case of mustard seeds). It shouldn't take more than a few minutes; watch carefully so they don't burn. Immediately transfer to a dish to cool (if left in the hot pan, they could burn).

To grind the spices to a coarse or fine powder, use an electric coffee grinder or a mortar and pestle.



Toast spices to draw out their flavor

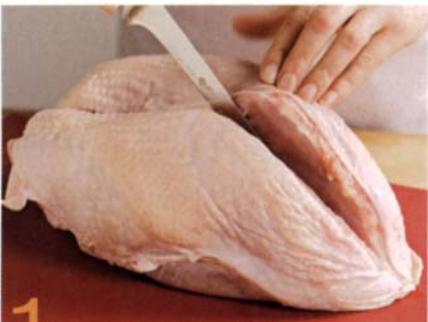
knife skills

How to bone and trim a turkey breast

To make Tom Douglas's scrumptious Dried Apricot & Date Stuffed Turkey Breast on p. 49, you'll need a boneless turkey breast half. In the supermarket, you might see more than one turkey breast option. Some markets carry skinless, boneless turkey breast halves—these will work fine for this recipe and require no extra prep work. You'll probably also see bone-in, skin-on turkey breasts (whole or split), which

you can ask the butcher to bone, or you can do it yourself, as shown below. This technique, similar to boning a chicken breast, is simple to master, and we think the extra effort is worth it because we got slightly moister and tastier results with a skin-on breast.

If you buy a whole breast, as shown here, you'll end up with two turkey breast halves, so you can freeze one for later.



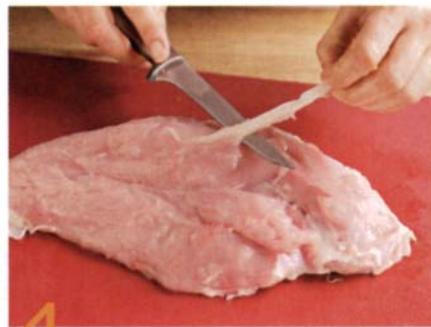
1 Beginning at the tail end of the turkey, make an incision along one side of the breast bone with a sharp boning knife. Feel your way along the breast bone with the tip of the knife, cutting your way toward the neck end of the bird.



2 As you near the neck end, you'll hit the top of the wish bone, which will angle your knife outward. Follow the wishbone, cutting to the end of the bone.



3 Return to the breast bone and begin cutting the breast meat away from the rib cage in one large piece, following the contours of the carcass and cutting with short, swiping strokes of the knife tip. As you progress, use your free hand to gently pull the meat from the carcass to help you see where to cut. Repeat with the other side.



4 To trim the breasts, cut off any excess skin, membrane, or fat. Leave the tenderloin attached, but if you see a white tendon protruding from its end, trim the tendon off.



Mushrooms To wash or not to wash?

Here's a conundrum: Mushrooms grow in compost and other not-so-tasty things like rotting logs and leaves. When they come to market, they often still have bits of this stuff clinging to them, so they seem to demand some cleaning. But mushrooms absorb water, and water-logged mushrooms resist browning in the sauté pan. And we like our mushrooms well browned.

Because of these opposing facts, there are different schools of thought on how to clean them. One approach is to brush them off with a dry or damp towel or a soft brush. This method works well if the mushrooms aren't very dirty, but if they are, I prefer to wash them, albeit gently. I rinse them briefly, one at a time, under running water, then transfer them to a dry towel and give them a little pat to blot away surface moisture. This method removes the grime without completely soaking them.

Mushrooms tend to exude lots of moisture when they're heated, particularly if they've been rinsed. This is why we like to sauté them, in plenty of oil or butter, over medium-high to high heat—the high temperature helps the moisture evaporate quickly so the mushrooms can then brown well.

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate ♦

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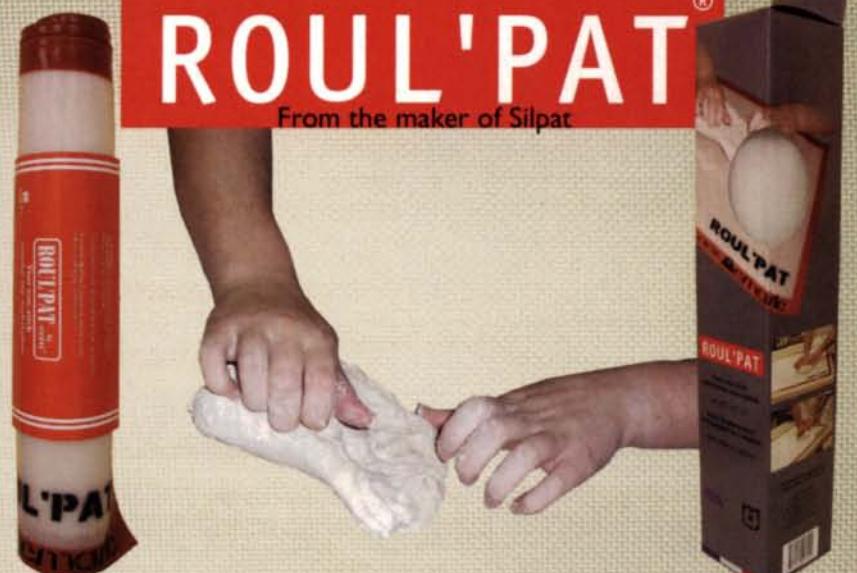
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Whole-Wheat Penne Pasta

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Whole grains have made a comeback. What else could explain why supermarkets suddenly boast entire sections stacked with whole-wheat pastas? Made from whole durum wheat, whole-wheat pasta offers the nutritional benefits of whole grains, including three times as much fiber as regular pasta. But its assertively wheaty flavor and coarser, grainier texture take some getting used to.

To determine which pasta is worth buying, we conducted a blind tasting of seven widely available brands of whole-wheat penne pasta, cooked in salted water and tossed with mild vegetable oil. To be honest, we didn't fall in love with any of them, but some were more appealing than others. Overall, we preferred the ones that resembled regular pasta in both flavor and texture. Our two favorites had a mild, well-balanced, slightly sweet wheat flavor and less of the toughness and grittiness that characterize whole-wheat pastas as a group.

Top picks

WHOLE FOODS 365 ORGANIC

\$1.29 (16 ounces)

We liked this pasta for its sweet, nutty flavor and mild wheatiness, which would pair well with a variety of sauces. A decent al dente texture, which reminded us of regular pasta, made it less chewy and gritty than most brands we tasted. This may well be the best choice for those who aren't keen on whole-wheat flavor but don't want to give up the nutritional benefits of whole-wheat pasta.



BIONATURAE

\$2.49 (16 ounces)

These organic whole-wheat penne imported from Italy scored almost as well as the Whole Foods brand. Their balanced, mildly wheaty flavor was a major selling point, and their relatively tender texture, with almost no trace of the coarse, gritty mouthfeel common to whole-wheat pasta, won us over as well. "Finally, a texture that's not bad," one panelist commented.

Runners-up Pastas numbered in order of preference; prices will vary.



3 RONZONI HEALTHY HARVEST

\$1.99 (13.25 ounces)

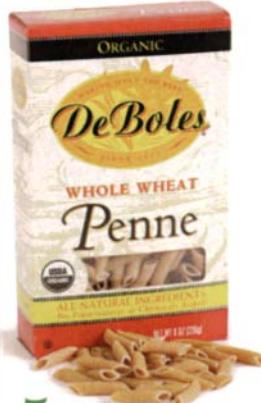
While the subtle wheaty flavor of this pasta (the only one in the group that blends regular semolina with whole durum wheat) was a hit among our tasters, its grainy, gummy texture was disappointing.



4 DE CECCO

\$1.99 (16 ounces)

An elegant bias-cut made this the prettiest of the bunch. But neither flavor nor texture could keep up with appearance. Stronger flavored than our top choices, it had thick walls and was tough and chewy, despite having cooked the longest (12 minutes, per package instructions).



5 DE BOLES

\$1.99 (8 ounces)

While we couldn't agree on whether we liked this pasta's flavor or not (some found it pleasant, while others said it was overly wheaty), we all concurred that its texture was too crumbly and at the same time oddly sticky and gummy.



6 DA VINCI

\$2.69 (12 ounces)

A stronger-than-average wheaty flavor and an out-of-place spiciness reminiscent of cinnamon caused this pasta's score to plummet. A dry, brittle texture prone to fracturing was equally unappealing.



7 HODGSON MILL

\$1.74 (12 ounces)

Our panel was unanimous in ranking this pasta the lowest. Much darker than the others, it had a disagreeably strong, slightly sour flavor with a bitter aftertaste. Its stiff and stubborn texture didn't win us over either.

Take it beyond al dente

It may be a fact of life that the texture of whole-wheat pasta is chewier and tougher than that of regular pasta. But we found that if you cook it a little beyond al dente it gets better. We recommend setting the timer for the longest cooking time on the package instructions (if there's a range) and taste the pasta when the timer goes off. If it still has an unpleasantly dry, gritty core, let it cook another minute or two and taste again. Just don't let it overcook because, as with regular pasta, it will become gummy.

pairing tips:

Whole-wheat pasta can overwhelm subtle cream- or herb-based sauces, but it pairs well with robust red or meat sauces and even bold Asian flavors like peanut sauce, soy sauce, and toasted sesame oil. Or try it as a substitute for hard-to-find soba noodles (Japanese buckwheat noodles).

A happy medium: multigrain pasta

If you think the flavor of whole-wheat pasta is a bit too strong and the texture too coarse, but you still want to get more grains into your diet, you may want to try something in between: multigrain pasta. We tasted two kinds: Barilla Plus penne (\$1.89 for a 16-ounce box) and Mueller's Multi Grain penne (\$1.69 for a 12-ounce box).

Barilla Plus pasta, which doesn't actually contain whole-wheat flour, is very similar to regular pasta. But it's still richer in protein and fiber thanks to a blend of coarse durum wheat, oat, spelt, barley, wheat fiber, and ground flaxseed, along with chickpea and lentil flour. We liked its meek, subtly sweet, and nutty flavor, which was reminiscent of regular pasta, and we found its tender texture infinitely more appealing than that of whole-wheat pasta. And because it's so mildly flavored, it's easy to pair with almost any sauce.

Mueller's Multi Grain pasta does contain whole-wheat flour, as well as whole-grain brown rice and oats. While closer to 100% whole-wheat pasta than Barilla, its whole-grain flavor is less assertive than that of the whole-wheat penne we tasted, and its texture less toothy and grainy. ♦



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Artisan Foods, p. 26

For information on where to find heritage turkeys in your area, visit SlowFoodUsa.org or HeritageFoodsUsa.com.

A Small Thanksgiving, p. 44

Many grocery stores now carry free-range or organic brands of turkey, such as Murray's, Bell & Evans, and Eberly's. Diestel turkeys and Koch's organic turkeys are sold at Whole Foods markets.

You can mail order free-range or organic turkeys at Willie Bird Turkeys (WillieBird.com), D'Artagnan (Dartagnan.com), and Maple Lawn Farms (MapleLawn.com). Empire Kosher turkeys are also available online at EmpireKosher.com. For more information on farms and stores that sell organic, free-range, and heritage birds, visit LocalHarvest.com or EatWellGuide.com. For more on heritage

turkeys, see the sources under Artisan Foods, at left.

You'll need a large, heavy-duty, flame-proof roasting pan for the turkey; for more information, see the equipment review on p. 38. For the roasted chicken recipe in this story, any roasting pan that fits a V-rack, including those that aren't flameproof, will do. Chicago Metallic's 9x13-inch roasting pan (sold with a rack) is a good option; it's \$24.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).

To tell if a bird is done, we rely on an instant-read thermometer. They're sold in most kitchenware stores, or visit Target.com for a Taylor commercial waterproof digital instant-read thermometer (\$14.99).

For sweet pimentón (Spanish smoked paprika), try Tienda.com (888-472-1022). Tom Douglas also likes SpanishTable.com (505-986-0243) and WorldSpice.com.

Butternut Squash, p. 56

Ancho chile powder (for the Sautéed Butternut Squash with Garlic, Ginger & Spices) is often available at well-stocked supermarkets, but if you can't find it, visit CooksWares.com (800-915-9788), where a 4-ounce jar sells for \$5.80.

Russet Potatoes, p. 60

For mashing russets, a ricer, food mill, or even just a simple potato masher will do the job, and most kitchenware stores carry all of these products. To order online, try the OXO Good Grips potato ricer (\$19.99 at Oxo.com) or All-Clad's food mill (\$99.99 at ChefsCatalog.com; 800-884-2433). Also, you'll find potato mashers in a range of shapes (we usually like the traditional wire mashers), sizes, and prices at Amazon.com.

Apple Pie, p. 64

So she can see when the bottom crust of her pie is perfectly golden brown, Carole Walter bakes her pies in a 9-inch Pyrex pie plate, available in most supermarkets. Carole introduces all her students to pastry cloths, which make it amazingly easy to roll out dough and ensure a more tender crust (for more on these, see p. 32). You can buy one for \$4.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810). A melon baller lets you remove apple cores without cutting away excess fruit. If you don't have one, try

Rösle's, which sells for \$18.95 at ChefsResource.com (866-765-2433).

Chicken Tikka Masala, p. 68

Garam masala is available in many supermarkets or online at Penzeys.com (800-741-7787), from \$3.19 for a 0.9-ounce pot.

Electric coffee grinders will grind spices quickly and easily, and they're available at most kitchenware stores. In a recent spice grinder review, our top pick was the DeLonghi Aromatic coffee grinder, model DCG39, which sells for \$29.95 at EspressoZone.com (800-345-8945).

Pastas From the Pantry, p. 72

You won't need any particular specialty ingredients for these pasta dishes, but if you're looking to stock your pantry with a few exceptional items, Tony Rosenfeld particularly recommends SalumeriaItaliana.com (800-400-5916) for its high-end pastas and jarred ingredients like roasted red peppers and artichokes.

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 84

Good mail-order sources for high-quality pecorino include FormaggioKitchen.com (888-212-3224), MurraysCheese.com (888-692-4339), and Agferrari.com (877-878-2783). And if you're in New York City, check out the shop where we bought our pecorinos, which has a wonderful selection but does not offer mail order: Di Palo Fine Foods, 200 Grand Street, New York (212-226-1033). ♦

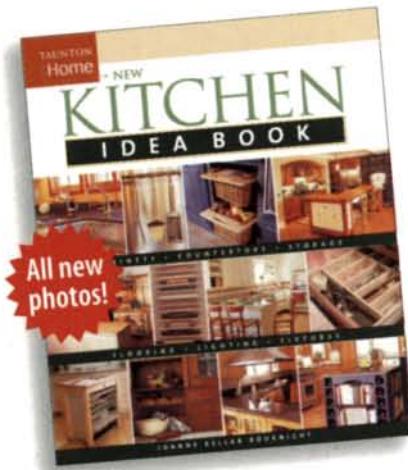
Tapas Menu, p. 76

Many of the Spanish ingredients mentioned in the tapas story are available at specialty food shops, and some, such as manchego cheese and sherry vinegar, can be found in supermarkets. If you have trouble finding piquillo peppers, jamón serrano, chorizo, pimentón, or anything else from Spain, you'll find it at Tienda.com (888-472-1022). Despaña Brand Foods in Jackson Heights, Queens, New York (718-779-4971), also has a full selection of products, as does Zingermans.com (888-636-8162).



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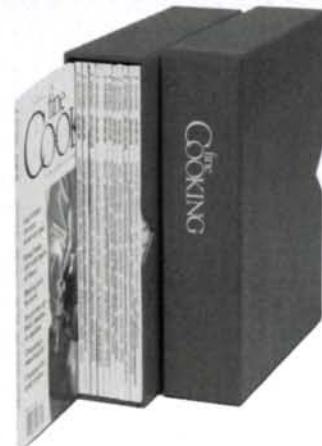


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nutrition information

Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein		Carb		Fats (g)			Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)		
Letters	10													
Honeyed Cauliflower w/ Toasted Almonds		150	80	4	15	10	1	7	1.5	0	230	4	based on 6 servings	
In Season	22													
Baked Sweet Potatoes w/ Maple-Pecan-Shallot Butter		350	70	5	66	8	4	2.5	1	15	40	9	based on 4 servings	
Thanksgiving	44													
Smoked Paprika & Fennel Roast Turkey w/ Onion Gravy		640	310	71	8	34	13	11	7	220	790	1	based on 12 servings per 1 tsp.	
Fennel Salt		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	670	0		
Apricot & Date Stuffed Turkey Breast w/ Marsala Glaze		540	120	50	31	14	3.5	8	1.5	140	590	2	based on 4 servings	
Cranberry-Honey-Glazed Chicken		670	270	50	50	30	10	11	6	175	430	4	based on 6 servings	
Fresh Cranberry Relish		90	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	based on 6 servings	
Bread Stuffings	51													
Cranberry & Pecan Sourdough Stuffing		260	120	6	31	14	5	5	2	60	430	3	based on 10 servings	
Southwestern-Style Cornbread & Sausage Stuffing		220	110	9	18	13	5	4.5	1.5	95	680	2	based on 10 servings	
Carrot, Mushroom, Water Chestnut & Rye Stuffing		200	80	6	24	9	5	3	1	60	450	3	based on 10 servings	
Butternut Squash	56													
Roasted Rosemary Butternut Squash & Shallots		110	60	1	12	7	1	5	1	0	290	3	based on 4 servings	
Roasted Butternut Squash & Pear Salad		310	250	3	17	28	5	17	4	10	370	5	based on 6 servings	
Sautéed Butternut Squash w/ Lemon, Walnuts & Parsley		280	230	3	15	25	7	10	8	20	380	5	based on 3 servings	
Sautéed Butternut Squash w/ Garlic, Ginger & Spices		150	100	1	14	12	7	3	0	30	320	4	based on 4 servings	
Russets	60													
Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes w/ Chives		290	110	5	41	12	7	3	0.5	30	650	4	based on 6 servings	
Cottage Pie w/ Beef & Carrots		490	260	25	29	29	12	12	1.5	85	780	4	based on 8 servings	
Three-Cheese Potato Gratin		330	190	11	25	21	13	6	1	70	270	2	based on 8 servings	
Apple Pie	64													
Classic Apple Pie		460	200	4	60	23	10	7	3.5	30	230	2	based on 10 servings	
Chicken Tikka Masala	68													
Chicken Tikka Masala		410	280	23	9	32	16	10	3	145	410	2	based on 8 servings	
Roasted Tandoori Chicken		230	100	28	2	11	3	4.5	2.5	100	170	0	based on 6 servings	
Pantry Pastas	72													
Penne w/ Tomatoes, Artichokes & Black Olives		560	140	23	82	16	3	9	2	20	1940	3	based on 4 servings	
Rigatoni w/ Red Pepper & Parmigiano Cream Sauce		540	120	18	80	13	4.5	6	1.5	15	1190	3	based on 4 servings	
Spaghetti w/ Garlic, Hot Pepper & Pecorino		470	140	14	64	16	4.5	8	1.5	15	550	3	based on 4 servings	
Fettuccine w/ Tuna, Lemon & Fried Capers		610	210	32	66	24	3.5	16	3.5	35	860	3	based on 4 servings	
Tapas Party	76													
Manchego Marinated in Olive Oil & Herbs		200	170	7	0	19	8	7	1	30	170	0	8 servings, w/ 2 tsp. oil	
Olives & Peppers on a Pick w/ Scallion Vinaigrette		200	150	6	5	17	7	8	1	40	840	1	based on 8 servings	
Crispy Potatoes w/ Tangy Tomato Sauce		260	140	3	27	16	2.5	12	2	0	310	3	based on 8 servings	
Sautéed Mushrooms w/ Garlic & Parsley		90	80	2	3	9	1	6	1	0	110	1	based on 8 servings	
Sautéed Chorizo w/ Red Wine		440	340	21	2	38	13	19	3.5	75	1050	0	8 servings, w/o bread	
Seared Shrimp w/ Pimentón & Sherry		140	50	18	1	6	1	4	1	165	400	0	based on 8 servings	
Toasted Bread w/ Chocolate		220	100	5	28	11	3.5	3.5	0	0	390	2	1.5 oz. bread w/ 1 tsp. oil	
From Our Test Kitchen	84													
Red-Wine-Poached Pears w/ Star Anise & Pistachios		410	80	4	58	9	4.5	3	1	30	95	3	based on 4 servings	
Kale w/ Pancetta & Marjoram		270	160	9	21	18	4	10	2.5	15	610	7	based on 4 servings	
Buttermilk Cornbread		120	35	3	17	4	2	1	0.5	50	310	1	based on 10 servings	
Turkey Tortilla Soup		740	360	44	59	41	9	17	12	75	740	13	based on 2 servings	
Quick & Delicious	98c													
Spicy Thai Beef Curry		510	300	40	15	33	22	6	2	80	800	3	based on 4 servings	
Tomato Fennel Soup		160	70	6	21	8	4.5	2	0.5	20	470	4	based on 4 servings	
Shrimp, Chickpeas & Spinach w/ Ginger & Cumin		270	80	21	28	9	1.5	5	1.5	125	820	6	based on 4 servings	
Tortellini Soup w/ Carrots, Peas & Leeks		310	90	17	43	9	4.5	2.5	1	35	540	4	based on 4 servings	
Creamy Seafood Chowder w/ Bacon, Thyme & Jalapeño		410	230	28	16	25	15	8	1.5	160	1220	1	based on 4 servings	
Chicken "Stroganoff" w/ Mushrooms, Sherry & Sage		460	220	41	12	24	8	9	4	150	730	1	based on 4 servings	
Spicy Sausage, Escarole & White Bean Stew		390	150	20	40	17	5	8	3	25	1070	13	based on 4 servings	
Back Cover														
Creamy Potato Soup w/ Pancetta Croutons		330	150	9	35	17	8	6	1.5	40	540	3	based on 8 servings	

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/16 teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

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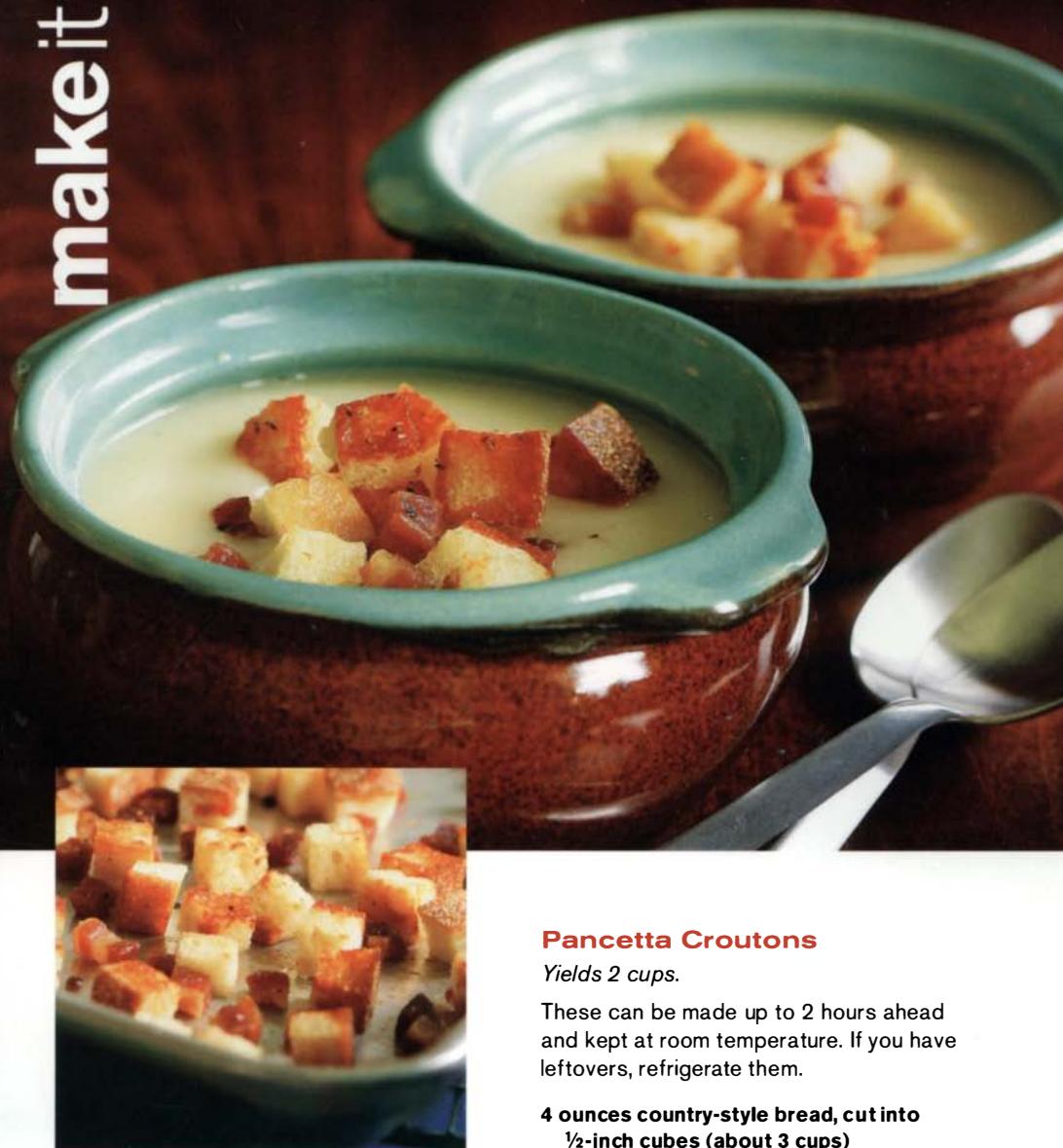
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make it tonight

Potato Soup for a Comforting Supper

Here's a soup that's utterly pleasing—smooth and full-bodied without being heavy, thanks to starchy russet potatoes and just a little cream to enrich the flavor. Pair it with a green salad for a simple but satisfying meal.



Add a little crunch: *Toasted bread and crisp pancetta turn a good potato soup into a great one. If you have leftovers, they make an addictive kitchen snack or a delicious addition to a salad.*

Pancetta Croutons

Yields 2 cups.

These can be made up to 2 hours ahead and kept at room temperature. If you have leftovers, refrigerate them.

4 ounces country-style bread, cut into ½-inch cubes (about 3 cups)
4 ounces pancetta, cut into ¼- to ½-inch dice (about ¾ cup)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Spread the bread cubes and pancetta on a rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle with the oil and a few grinds of black pepper and toss to combine. Bake, stirring a few times, until the pancetta is crisp and the bread cubes are golden, about 20 minutes. Let cool.

Creamy Potato Soup with Pancetta Croutons

Serves six as a main course or eight as a first course; yields about 8 cups.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 medium onions (8 ounces total), chopped (about 2 cups)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black or white pepper
3 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 pounds russet potatoes (3 to 4 medium), peeled and cut into ¾- to 1-inch chunks
4 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth
2 bay leaves, preferably fresh
1 cup whole milk
½ cup light or heavy cream, plus more as needed for garnish
1 recipe Pancetta Croutons (below left)

Melt the butter in a large (4-quart) saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, season with salt and pepper, and cook gently, stirring occasionally, until translucent but not at all browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook another 2 minutes. Add the potatoes, stir, pour in the broth, and add the bay leaves. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, partially cover, reduce the heat to medium low or low and simmer gently until the potatoes are very tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Discard the bay leaves.

Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender (being careful to fill the blender only two-thirds full and vent the lid). If the soup is too thick to blend, add a little of the milk. Pulse the blender in short bursts and avoid overworking the soup.

Rinse the soup pot, and return the soup to it. Add the milk and cream and heat through. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle the soup into bowls and top each with a generous handful of the pancetta croutons. Garnish with a thread of cream, if you like.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

More recipes for russet potatoes begin on page 60.

quick & delicious

BY JOANNE MCALLISTER SMART

Warming soups and stews

are just what I want when the weather turns colder, but I don't always have time to make them. Fortunately, I've learned how to get the essence of a long-cooked soup or stew in a fraction of the time. Slicing meat into small pieces, for example, cuts down cooking time. Quick-cooking ingredients like shrimp and fish, and store-bought items like canned broth, cheese tortellini, and canned clams can help speed things up, too. Because these dishes don't get a lot of stove time to intensify flavor, bright additions (jalapeño in the seafood chowder), international twists (Thai-influenced beef stew), and tasty accompaniments (goat cheese croutons for the tomato soup) make a big impact.



Creamy Seafood Chowder with Bacon, Thyme & Jalapeño

Serves four.

- 4 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips**
- 1 medium shallot, minced**
- 1 large jalapeño, seeded and very finely chopped (about 2 Tbs.)**
- 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour**
- 2 6½-oz. cans chopped clams, clams and juice separated (about 1 cup juice)**
- 2 8-oz. bottles clam juice**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 8 to 10 oz. unpeeled red potatoes (about 2 medium), scrubbed and cut into ½-inch dice**
- ½ tsp. dried thyme**
- ¾ lb. skinless haddock or cod fillets**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

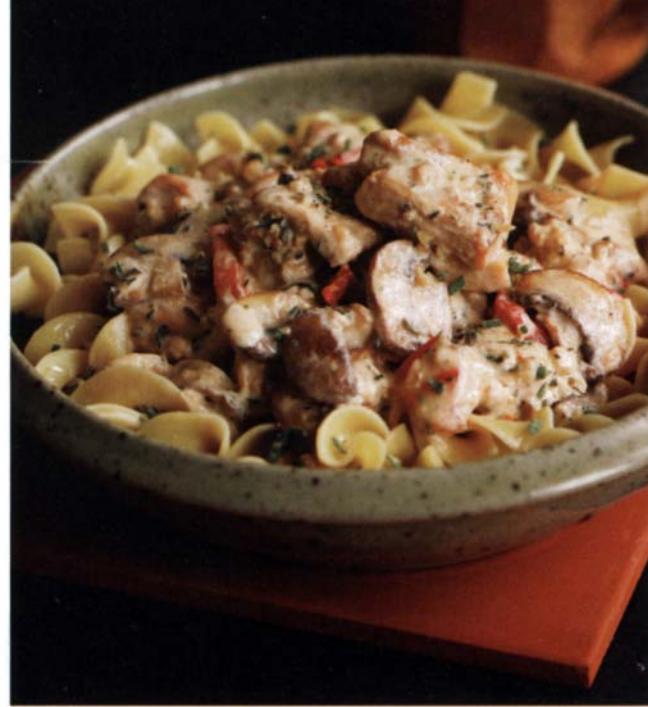
In a heavy 4-qt. saucepan or Dutch oven, cook the bacon over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until browned and crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer the bacon to a small dish lined with paper towels, leaving the fat behind in the pan.

Add the shallots and 1 Tbs. of the jalapeño to the bacon fat and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are

softened, about 2 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Gradually stir in all the clam juice (from the cans and the bottles). Add the cream, potatoes, and thyme, and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat as necessary and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add the whole fish fillets and cook for 3 minutes. Stir in the clams and continue stirring until the fish has broken into chunks. Cook until the fish is cooked through and the clams are heated, about another 2 minutes.

Season the soup to taste with salt and pepper. Portion into warm soup bowls and sprinkle each serving with the reserved bacon and the remaining jalapeño.

Note: The cream in the soup tempers most of the jalapeño's heat, but you can still taste its bright, fresh flavor.



Chicken "Stroganoff" with Mushrooms, Sherry & Sage

Serves three to four.

4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 8-oz. package sliced cremini (baby bella) mushrooms

Kosher salt

**1 shallot, finely chopped
2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh sage**

**Freshly ground black pepper
1 3/4 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs (5 or 6), trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1 1/2- to 2-inch pieces**

1 Tbs. finely chopped garlic (about 2 large cloves)

1/3 cup dry sherry

1 whole jarred roasted red pepper, drained and cut into thin strips (about 1/2 cup)

1/2 cup sour cream

1 plum tomato, cored, seeded, and cut into medium dice

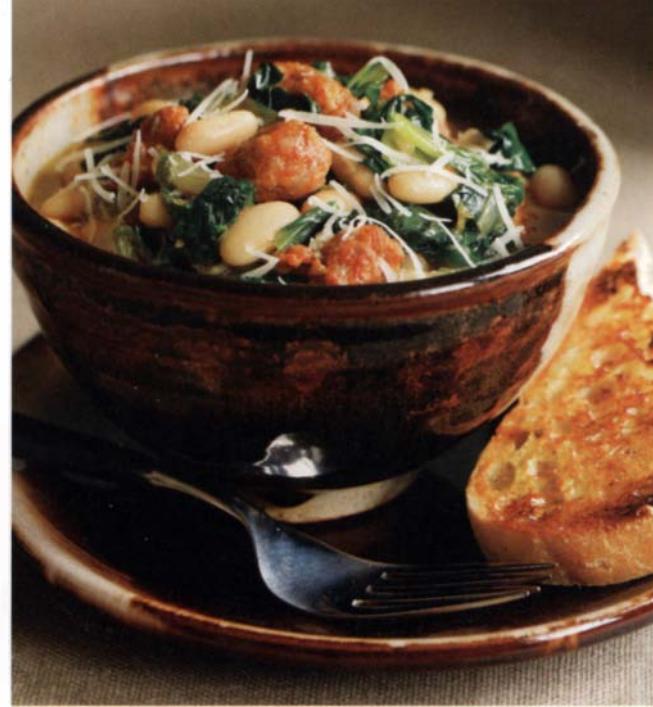
In a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan, heat 2 tsp. of the oil over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, season generously with salt, and cook undisturbed until well browned on one side, 1 to 3 minutes. Add half of the shallot and 1/2 Tbs. of the sage to the pan and continue to cook, stirring, until the mushrooms are well browned all over, another 3 to 5 min-

utes. Season generously with black pepper and transfer to a bowl. Leave the pan off the heat.

Generously season the chicken thighs with salt and pepper. Return the pan to medium-high heat, add the remaining 2 tsp. oil, and swirl to coat the pan. Add the chicken and cook undisturbed for 1 minute. Add 1/2 Tbs. of the garlic, 1/2 Tbs. of the sage, and the remaining shallot and continue to cook, stirring, until the chicken is no longer pink on the outside, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms, sherry, and red pepper and cook to reduce the sherry slightly, about 2 minutes.

Lower the heat to medium and stir in the sour cream, tomato, and the remaining garlic. Partially cover the pan and simmer until the chicken is cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes. If the sauce seems overly thick, thin it with a little water. Season to taste with more salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with the remaining sage.

Serving suggestion:
Serve over egg noodles tossed with butter.



Spicy Sausage, Escarole & White Bean Stew

Serves three to four.

1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, chopped

3/4 lb. hot Italian sausage, casings removed

2 medium cloves garlic, minced

2 15-oz. cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

1 small head escarole, chopped into 1- to 2-inch pieces, washed, and lightly dried

1 cup low-salt canned chicken broth

1 1/2 tsp. red-wine vinegar; more to taste

Kosher salt

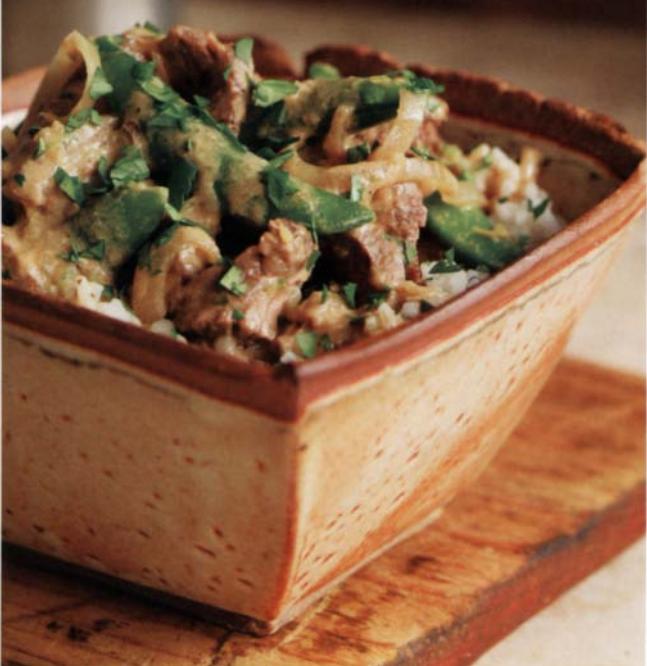
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Heat the oil in a heavy 5- to 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the sausage, raise the heat to medium high, and cook, stirring and breaking up

the sausage with a wooden spoon or spatula until lightly browned and broken into small (1-inch) pieces, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, then stir in the beans. Add the escarole to the pot in batches; using tongs, toss with the sausage mixture to wilt the escarole and make room for more.

When all the escarole is in, add the chicken broth, cover the pot, and cook until the beans are heated through and the escarole is tender, about 8 minutes. Season to taste with the vinegar and salt. Transfer to bowls and sprinkle each portion with some of the Parmigiano.

Serving suggestion:
Toasted bread rubbed with garlic and drizzled with olive oil makes a nice accompaniment.



Spicy Thai Beef Curry

Serves four.

- 1 Tbs. vegetable oil**
- 1½ lb. beef sirloin tips**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup thinly sliced shallots (about 2 medium-large)**
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh ginger**
- 1 to 2 tsp. Thai red curry paste**
- ½ cup low-salt canned chicken broth**
- 1 13½-oz. can unsweetened coconut milk**
- 1 Tbs. fish sauce**
- ½ cups frozen sugar snap peas**
- 1 large lime, zest finely grated and fruit cut into wedges**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**

Heat the oil in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season the sirloin tips with salt and pepper and sear the meat in batches until nicely browned on two sides, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the shallots to the pan and cook until just tender and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the ginger and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the curry paste and cook, stirring, about 30 seconds. Stir in ¼ cup of the broth, scraping up any bits that are stuck to

the pan. Add ⅓ cup of the coconut milk, stirring until the curry paste has blended in completely. Stir in the remaining coconut milk and broth. Add the fish sauce.

Increase the heat to medium high. Return the beef to the pan (along with any juices), stir, and simmer until the meat is just cooked through, 8 to 12 minutes.

Take the pan off the heat. Remove the meat and transfer to a cutting board. Stir the sugar snap peas into the sauce and cover the pan. Let the meat rest for 1 minute, then slice it thinly across the grain; return it to the pan along with the lime zest. If necessary, return the pan to medium heat until the peas are thawed and heated through.

Portion the curry into four warm bowls, sprinkle with the cilantro, and serve with the lime wedges.

Serving suggestion: Serve over jasmine rice.

Note: If you like spicy foods, use 2 tsp. curry paste; otherwise, use 1 tsp. curry paste—the curry will still have a kick to it.



Tomato-Fennel Soup

Serves three to four as a light main course.

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced**
- Kosher salt**
- ½ tsp. whole fennel seeds, chopped**
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes**
- 1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes**
- 1 cup low-salt canned chicken broth; more as needed**
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice**
- ½ cup whole or low-fat milk**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

In a 4-qt. saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and a big pinch of salt. Cook until softened but not browned, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Add the fennel seeds and a pinch of red pepper flakes and cook for another minute. Add the tomatoes, broth, and orange juice. Increase the heat to

medium high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium or medium low and simmer for 15 minutes to meld the flavors.

Remove the soup from the heat. Using a hand blender or a regular blender, purée the soup. Add the milk and if the soup seems thick, add more chicken broth until thinned to your liking. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If necessary, gently reheat before serving.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with warm goat cheese toasts: Mash fresh goat cheese (thinned with a little cream if necessary) with finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley. Spread the mixture on toasted baguette slices and put under the broiler to heat the cheese.



Shrimp, Chickpeas & Spinach with Ginger & Cumin

Serves three to four.

¾ lb. large shrimp (31 to 40 count), peeled and deveined
Kosher salt
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ large lemon, cut into 5 wedges
1 small onion (about 4 oz.), chopped
1½ Tbs. finely chopped fresh ginger
2 small cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. ground cumin
Pinch cayenne
1 14- to 16-oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
10 oz. mature spinach, well washed, stemmed, and coarsely chopped
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

In a small bowl, toss the shrimp with ½ tsp. salt. Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add the shrimp and cook until one side is pink, about 2 minutes. Turn the shrimp over and continue to cook until pink all over, still a bit translucent in the center, and not quite cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Take the skillet off the heat and transfer the shrimp to a plate. Squeeze one of the lemon wedges over the shrimp.

Put the skillet over medium heat. Pour the remaining

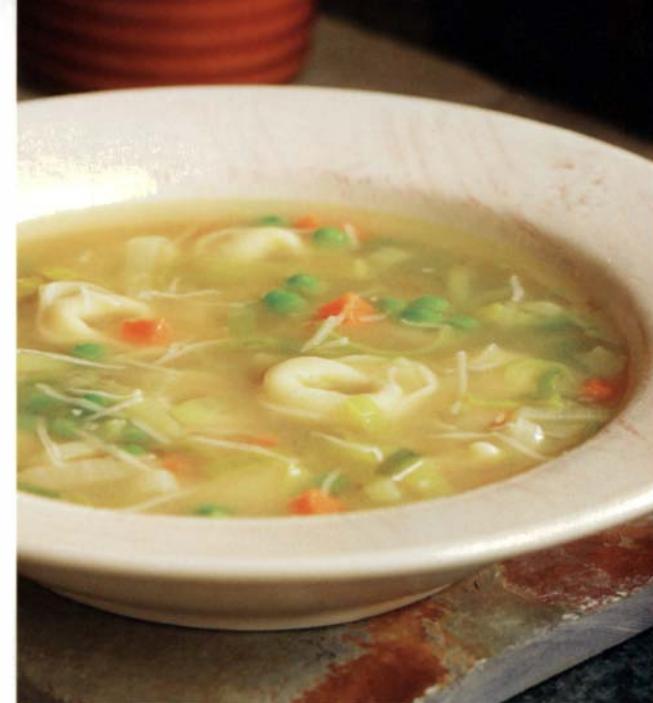
1 Tbs. oil into the skillet, then add the onion. Sprinkle with a big pinch of salt and cook until the edges of the onions begin to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the ginger and garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 1 minute. Add the cumin and cayenne and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 20 seconds. Add 1½ cups water, the chickpeas, and ½ tsp. salt. Simmer over medium-high heat for 5 minutes to develop the flavors.

Using a potato masher, mash about half of the chickpeas right in the pan. Add the spinach and cilantro. Using tongs, carefully toss the greens to help them cook evenly and wilt, about 2 minutes.

Add the reserved shrimp and any juices that have accumulated on the plate. Cook for another 1 or 2 minutes to reheat the shrimp and cook them fully (be careful not to overcook them). Season with salt to taste. Portion into warm bowls and serve with the remaining lemon wedges on the side.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with toasted pita, or even better, crisped pappadams.



Tortellini Soup with Carrots, Peas & Leeks

Serves four.

2 medium leeks (12 oz. untrimmed)
1 Tbs. unsalted butter
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped (about 1 Tbs.)
½ medium carrot, peeled and finely diced (2 Tbs.)
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
5 cups low-salt canned chicken broth
8 oz. frozen cheese tortellini
1 cup frozen peas
¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano

Trim the roots and dark green leaves from the leeks. Slice the white and light green part in half lengthwise and then slice the halves thinly crosswise. Rinse well and drain.

Melt the butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic, leeks, and carrot. Season with a couple

pinches of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 5 to 7 minutes. (It's fine if the vegetables brown lightly.) Stir in ¼ tsp. pepper and cook for about 20 seconds, then add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Add the tortellini and cook for 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to a simmer and add the peas. Continue to simmer until the tortellini are cooked, 3 to 5 minutes.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Portion the soup into warm bowls, top each with some of the cheese, and serve.

Tip: You can make most of the soup ahead, but don't add the tortellini until you're ready to eat or they'll become mushy.